









## Martini advert stirs fresh trouble

MARIANNE MACDONALD  
Media Correspondent

The makers of the "cosmetic surgery" advertisement for Martini have run into another row over the controversial campaign.

Last month the television advertisement, featuring people who had cosmetic surgery to be attractive enough to "drink the beautiful drink", were attacked by a plastic surgeon as offensive to disfigured children.

Now the drinks maker faces a claim that one of the advertisements was copied from *Face Facts*, an award-winning short film shown three times on Channel 4 in the last three years.

The allegation comes from Linda Hughes, 31, a lecturer at Barnet College, north London, who made *Face Facts* in the form of a spoof advertisement for "Beauty Inc", a fictitious cosmetics company.

The film, which won a Gold Plaque at the Chicago International Film Festival, features an unattractive man selling the message that you can be happy only if you are, cosmetically transformed.

Like one Martini advertisement, her film shows a patient about to undergo surgery, then covered in bandages but fully dressed.

It concludes with the triumphant slogan: "Together we can make the whole world beautiful." Martini's slogan was "With Martini, we can make Britain a more beautiful place."

Ms Hughes said from her London home yesterday: "If the similarity was coincidental, there were quite a lot of coincidences - the subject matter, the smug tone of the fascist narrator and the final line."

"My films last went out on Channel 4 in May and September last year, while the Martini ad was launched last December."

Ms Hughes was so angered by the apparent connection that she asked a friend to do an "interview" with Alan Young, the copywriter at Howell Henry Chaldecott Lury who came up with the idea, inspired in her case by a promotional staff video for Sainsbury's. "It's fair to say he was quite vague," she said. "My friend said, 'It's quite a striking ad, what made you think of it?' and he replied, 'That's the eternal question.'"

After consulting a lawyer, she then wrote to Westbay, the Southampton-based company which distributes Martini in the UK. But it refused to accept any connection.

Christopher Meredith, marketing controller for Martini, wrote back: "Having checked with our advertising agency I have to advise you that the Martini advertising of which you complain was developed without anyone involved having seen your film."

"I regret I am unable to discern any real connection between your film and the Martini advertising, beyond the fact that both explore (in a satirical fashion) the general theme of people being made physically more attractive."

Ms Hughes is fighting back, although not through the courts. She has put her film on the Internet, together with the interview with Mr Young.

"I know advertising has got to take ideas from things which are going on but I didn't make a lot of money from my film, whereas they've spent £5m."

Her film can be viewed on <http://www.hyena.co.uk/Face-Facts>.

## Two hundred security guards and £100m couldn't stop a mallard doing nature's work



Safety zone: The mallard's nest (above) containing 11 eggs (below) cordoned off on the site of the Newbury bypass

Photograph: John Voos

The bulldozers line the horizon, the contractors are preparing for a hard day's graft, writes Louise Jury.

And in the middle of the path of the Newbury bypass in Berkshire, a mallard is sitting upon 11 new eggs.

The human protesters have been forced to depart after a three-month battle, leaving the Thames Valley police to complain of the £2.6m cost of the eviction programme.

However, as a Friends of the Earth spokesman said last night: "They may have got rid of the protesters but will find it harder to evict the wildlife. It will keep on coming back. It shows the robustness of nature."

One of the key arguments of the environmental protesters during their campaign has been the potential damage to wildlife in the area.

Although mallards are not a rare species, elsewhere on the proposed route badgers, rare snails and a range of birds, including dunlocks, wrens, lapwings and skylarks, have made their mark.

The mallard pictured above has been made safe, cordoned off with orange tape, while she tends her nest.

"It will be good if they keep on getting delays because they find wildlife there," the Friends of the Earth spokesman said. More than 200 security

guards at a time have been employed to guard the site of the £101m bypass.

Work began at the beginning of January on the first stage, which involved clearing the site and preparing it for construction.

Last week, Charles Pollard, Chief Constable of Thames Valley, criticised a hard-core of protesters for forcing up the bill for handling the dispute by their actions.

He appealed to ordinary middle-class protesters to disassociate themselves from the allegedly violent actions of what he described as more militant campaigners.

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## Observation tower offers a global perspective

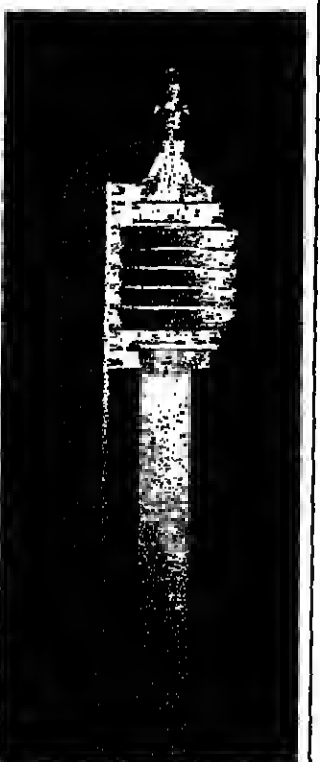
LOUISE JURY

The public could be given the opportunity to get a glimpse of deserts, savannah or rainforests several thousand miles away without having to travel further than London.

Under a scheme conceived by Peter Head, a British engineer - one of several Millennium projects to be unveiled this week - members of the public could walk into a specially devised centre in the capital to link up via satellite with other parts of the world.

A consortium of businesses is behind the £92m plan for a communications and observation tower, called Globorama, which would be built next to the agreed site of the Millennium exhibition in Greenwich, south-east London.

The 200m high tower, which is expected to attract 2.4 million visitors by 2000, would give panoramic views of London. But, more significantly, through satellite technology, it would provide viewing platforms offering the chance to interact with major cities and natural environments "live" across the



The £92m Globorama, which would be built in Greenwich

world. The Royal Geographical Society, which is backing the project, hopes to gain significantly through the construction of an international network of environmental research programmes linked to the project.

But the scheme is dependent on part-funding from the Millennium Commission, which is due to announce its "long-list" of submissions this week.

## Unilever spurns industrial fishing

NICHOLAS SCHOON  
Environment Correspondent

In a major victory for conservationists, one of the world's largest multinationals is to boycott the industrial fishing which is putting the North Sea ecosystem in jeopardy.

Unilever yesterday announced that within a year it would stop using all oils derived from industrial fishing in European waters. This fishery catches more than 1 million tonnes of small fish at the base of the food chain each year and is unregulated by the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy.

The Anglo Dutch conglomerate, which owns the Bird's Eye brand, said it now accepted this catch of sprat, whiting, pout and sandeels was unsustainable and destructive. Unilever uses 100,000 tonnes of fish oil a year, a quarter of the total made from this catch in European waters, for products as diverse as cosmetics, cakes and biscuits and hair conditioner.

These small fish are an important food source for sea birds, seals and porpoises, and also for larger fish species which are heavily preyed on by Europe's fishing fleets.

Scientists agree that cod and haddock have been overfished for years in the North Sea, and

there is a risk of the stocks collapsing. Denmark, Norway and Iceland account for the great majority of industrial fishing off Europe, with Britain trailing in fourth place.

Unilever's announcement came as European Union fisheries ministers met in Brussels yesterday to discuss fish quotas.

Britain's fisheries minister, Tony Baldry, also launched a campaign to return Britain's fishing waters to the United Kingdom fleet.

He warned that the Common Fisheries Policy could regain credibility only if it clamped down on "quota-boppers" who plunder another nation's EU

fish catch allocation - with the blessing of Brussels. The move follows the Government's legal defeat at the hands of the Spanish trawler fleet. The European Court of Justice has ruled that one country cannot stop trawlers from another member state sharing its quota.

Now claims worth about £30m are in the pipeline from Spanish boat owners who were excluded from UK waters after registering in British ports to qualify for British fish quotas.

Mr Baldry said that the system must change, adding: "Allocations of national quotas should be for the benefit of fishing communities in the member

state concerned - not for fishermen from another country."

But he ruled out any British pull-out from the Common Fisheries Policy as demanded by some ministers and trawlermen in the wake of the courtroom defeat. "Withdrawal from the CFP is a non-starter but it is crucial that there are reforms to the way it works. Policy-makers must listen more carefully to what fishermen themselves are saying," he said.

He also unveiled plans for setting up regional committees to consider the management of EU fisheries. They would cover areas like the Baltic, North Sea and English Channel.

## 'Mail' buys 20% of ITN in forced sale

MARIANNE MACDONALD  
Media Correspondent

The *Daily Mail* has bought a 20 per cent stake in ITN, maker of *ITV's News at Ten*, it was announced yesterday.

In a joint statement, Granada and Carlton Communications said they were disappointed at having to sell their investments but were "delighted to be selling their shares to another professional news organisation".

ITN will now be jointly owned by Carlton (20 per cent), Granada (20 per cent), DMGT

the 1990 Broadcasting Act, which limited to 20 per cent individual shareholdings in the news provider which services ITV, Channel 4 and the soon-to-be launched Channel 5.

The ITV companies said they were disappointed at having to sell their investments but were "delighted to be selling their shares to another professional news organisation".

ITN will now be jointly owned by Carlton (20 per cent), Granada (20 per cent), DMGT

(20 per cent), Reuter (18 per cent), Anglia TV and Scottish TV (5 per cent each). The remaining 12 per cent will be owned by a Carlton/Granada joint venture company, set up to hold their excess shares.

The reduction of Carlton and Granada's ITN stakes has been a long-running saga. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. It was from these shares that the DMGT sale was made.

Last year ITN had a turnover of £89m and made a £15.3m profit in the year to last December.

The DMGT said that the purchase, which will be paid for in cash, was made through its Harnsworth Broadcasting Division. Sir David English, who chairs the division, will represent the trust on the ITN board.

"I am delighted to announce our purchase of this shareholding in ITN. News is our business and we look forward to developing a valuable partnership with ITN and its shareholders," Sir David said.

But according to Jon Nicholl, acting director of the Medical Care Research Unit at the University of Sheffield, while dangerous sports such as rock-climbing were highest of all, the relatively tiny numbers of people who took part made them statistically insignificant.

But he added that as in Ben Smoldon's case, it was the way the game was played that counted. "If it's played in a very tough and competitive way then the risks are greatly increased."



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**Class conflict: Politicians condemn action over pupil of 13 as scheme to raise standards fails**

## Teachers under fire for strike over 'violent' boy

FRAN ABRAMS  
Education Correspondent

Teachers who have voted to go on strike in a dispute over a disruptive 13-year-old boy were criticised by politicians from both major parties yesterday.

Appeals for staff at Glaisdale School, in Nottingham, to remain at their positions came from Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, and a spokesman for the Labour Party.

Twenty of the school's 38 teachers will go on all-out strike from Friday if agreement cannot be reached at a meeting today between Nottinghamshire County Council, the school's head teacher and the boy's family. The rest of the staff may also decide to refuse to teach the boy.

Richard Wilding was permanently excluded from the school in February after allegedly being involved in 30 incidents of violence and disruption since last September. The decision was supported by the county council but was overturned by an independent appeals panel.

Staff at the school objected to his return to school, saying he had both learning difficulties and emotional problems and that he should be in a special unit. He is now being taught separately from other pupils by a supply teacher.

Yesterday, Mrs Shephard

blamed the local authority for the dispute with members of the National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT).

Speaking at a local election press conference, she said the Government intended to introduce legislation to reduce such incidents.



Richard Wilding: Given lessons on his own

"What is Labour-controlled Nottinghamshire doing about this matter? It does seem clear that the right place for this child has not yet been found," she said. "It is the duty of the LEA to find appropriate education for that child."

It was never right for teachers to strike and to harm children's education, she added. Labour's deputy leader, John Prescott, agreed with Mrs Shephard

hard that striking in these circumstances was wrong, but he blamed government legislation and accused the Secretary of State of using the issue as a "political pawn" during local elections.

"I'm more concerned about the parents involved in this and the children who are worried about the extent of violence in their schools and I think the Nottingham authority should be given all the power to deal with it. Unfortunately Mrs Shephard's legislation makes it very difficult for them to deal with," he said.

The boy's mother, Rita Wilding, has said she is considering legal action. "I think it is disgusting to strike over my son. It has all been blown up out of proportion."

"Richard is not as bad as they make out, and if he is given the right support he can cope with mainstream schooling. There are children far worse than Richard in Glaisdale," she said.

The NASUWT has been involved in a growing number of cases in which staff have refused to teach a difficult child. There were 52 such cases last year and about six each month this year, but strikes are rarer.

In 1991, staff at the Bishop of Llandaff school in South Glamorgan threatened to strike after three boys who had sexually assaulted a girl were returned to school, but their parents withdrew them.



Serving a good cause: Some of the plates painted by 78 celebrities, including Maureen Lipman, Richard Branson and Kevin Keegan, to raise money for arthritis victims. The plates will be auctioned at the Art Connoisseur's Gallery, central London, on Thursday. Photograph: Nick Turpin

## Appeal told of murder case 'conjecture'

The girlfriend of a businessman convicted of murdering her parents yesterday said she was certain his appeal would succeed. Cheryl Tooze, 36, spoke of her belief in Jonathan Jones' innocence outside the Court of Appeal after three judges were told that his conviction was based on "suspicion, speculation and conjecture".

Harry Tooze, 64, and his wife, Megan, 67, were each shot once in the back of the

head with a shotgun at their farm at Llanharan, Mid Glamorgan. Miss Tooze said: "I have always said that Jonathan is innocent from the very beginning. This will be demonstrated over the next few days by his QC, because there was absolutely no evidence to convict him. Sometimes I feel frustrated and helpless and I wish there was more I could do because my real fight begins when he is released and the investigation begins again to

find my parents' real killers." John Rees QC, representing Jones, told the appeal judges that the murder method would have resulted in blood and brain tissue but there was never any forensic evidence at the Newport Crown Court trial in April last year that would link Jones with the crime. Jones, 36, of Orpington, Kent, was convicted on a 10-2 majority verdict after the prosecution claimed he paid a

surprise visit to the farm in July 1993, and had tea with the couple before shooting them. Mr Rees said it was never proved Jones was anywhere near the farmhouse at the time of the killings and he would be bringing fresh evidence to back his claim that he was looking for an office in Orpington for Miss Tooze. His own alibi, that he spoke to lift engineers in Orpington during the day of the killings, was never disproved.

The prosecution originally claimed at the trial that Jones' motive was money, said Mr Rees. But this was not developed and was eventually dropped. In his summing-up to the jury, Mr Justice Rongier revived the financial motive and in doing so misdirected the jury, said Mr Rees. The appeal, being heard by Lord Justice Rose, Mr Justice Dyson and Mr Justice Gage, was adjourned to today.

## £50m on appraisal 'but it is a failure'

JUDITH JUDD  
Education Editor

More than £50m spent on teacher appraisal has failed to raise standards in schools, according to an inspectors' report published yesterday. Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, has called for a closer link between teacher performance and pay.

The inspectors' report, based on visits to more than 300 schools, says that only four of those linked pay with appraisal. It points out that in only 20 per cent of schools is there any sign that appraisal, introduced five years ago by the Government, improves teaching.

Mr Woodhead's Office for Standards in Education is reviewing teacher appraisal with the Teacher Training Agency and their recommendations will be sent to Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education.

At present, government guidance says that there should be no automatic link between appraisal and promotion and pay but that heads and governors may legitimately take it into account. Under existing rules agreed by teacher unions, appraisal reports cannot be used to sack a teacher. Mr Woodhead believes both principles should be re-examined.

The report argues that appraisal needs to focus more sharply on raising standards and should be less secretive. One teacher described in the report refused to let an appraisal

Should he get a bonus?

Chris Woodhead (salary £82,000), Chief Inspector of Schools, and enthusiasts for performance-related pay, will be appraised on Friday by Michael Richard, permanent secretary at the Department for Education and Employment. Should he get a bonus?

Sir Rhodri Iwan Jones, former education minister: "He is excellent. Whether you agree with him or not... he is good news. I would definitely give him an alpha."

Professor Ted Wright, of Exeter University's department of education: "His bonus should be minus £50,000 in view of the mayhem he has caused in education and the lack of substance to the political slant he puts on things."

Sheila Lawlor, director of the think-tank Politics: "I'm not sure whether public servants should get bonuses. But he should be commended to the sides. He is one of the first heads of inspection to be detached from schools... outstanding in being so impartial."

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the NASUWT: "Withhold the bonus but no sanctions... he should stop continually raising the subject of the 4 per cent of incomplete teachers knowing it will be typed up by the media."

report be used as a reason for in-service training. Mr Woodhead said: "That is nonsensical... The culture within education at present is not one which welcomes the notion of performance pay." He

said that the confidentiality surrounding appraisal was excessive. "If appraisal is to have the impact it should, then it must be open to a wider range of uses than at present."

Excellent and outstanding teachers should be identified and their performance should be rewarded. Those who were in difficulties should be offered support but action must be taken if they did not improve.

Mr Woodhead, who earns £82,000 a year, said he personally supported performance-related pay, and was himself due to be appraised under the Civil Service scheme on Friday.

Appraisal involves interviews and observation by senior colleagues followed by the setting of targets for action. All teachers are supposed to have been appraised by this year but the reduction of special government grants for the programme has led to some delays, the report says. Nearly half the schools reported difficulties in completing their appraisal programmes.

David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, said: "Chris Woodhead has admitted that the Government has sidelined appraisal. Support for the scheme has been dropped by ministers."

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers, said his union would be prepared to look at linking pay with teaching quality provided the general level of pay was high.

## Gas death landlord escapes jail

A landlord was yesterday given an 18-month suspended sentence after admitting the manslaughter of a tenant who died of carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty gas fire. Thomas Beedie, of Cottingham, Hull, admitted killing Tracey Murphy, 19, found dead in her flat in Pearson Park, Hull, in 1993. He changed his plea on Friday after more than two days of legal argument in Sheffield Crown Court.

In 1994 the Health and Safety Executive prosecuted Beedie, who was convicted of failing to maintain the fire in Ms Murphy's room and he and his wife were each fined £1,500. In July 1994 he was prosecuted by Hull City Council and found guilty of 15 offences under the Housing Regulations Act. He received a two-year conditional discharge.

At the inquest on Ms Murphy in September 1994, a jury ruled she had been unlawfully killed.

## DAILY POEM

### Grandfather in Green

By George Szirtes

My grandfather, the Budapest shoemaker wrote plays in his spare time, and then he died. His body became a pebble on a beach of softness across which swept the pale green tide.

Pale green, I think, would suit him as a tint - under his eye, or thinly flexed across the hooked bridge of his nose. His sour complexion was cooking apples, a summary of loss,

each a pucker in the flesh. His waistcoat was grey as clouds, a pale green handkerchief blossoming from the pocket. Even his tongue would sit in his mouth, soft and green as a leaf.

And so he returned to nature after all, the pale green gall within him in the shut cavern of his stomach, and the green smell of gas still lingering in the hall.

George Szirtes was born in 1948 in Hungary and came to England with his family following the uprising in Budapest in 1956. He has published seven poetry books and is renowned both as a translator from Hungarian and as a poet in the English language. OUP have recently published his *Selected Poems 1976-1996*. This is distinctive and tangy verse, rich in Slavic melancholy and the burden of history.

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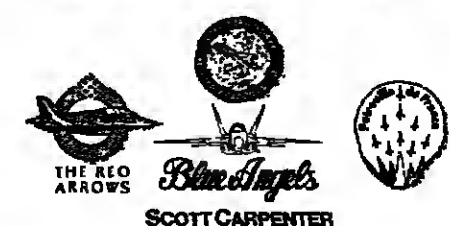


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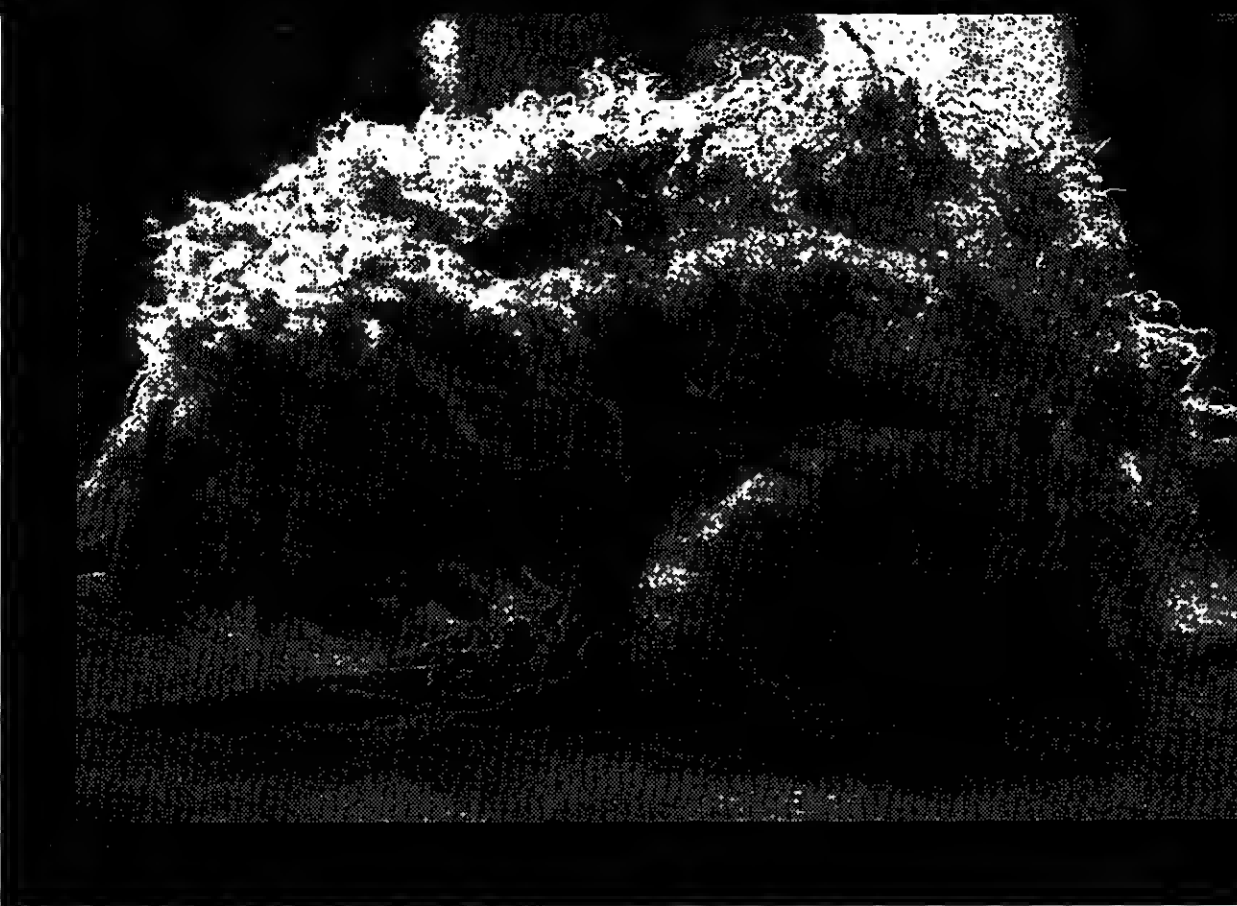
They don't walk them. They don't take them to the vet.

They don't train them. They don't inoculate them. They don't spay them. They don't neuter them.

They don't groom them. They don't comb them. They don't clip their nails. They don't play with them.

They don't exercise them. They don't de-tangle their fur. They don't clean their paws. They don't supervise them.

They don't buy them leads. They don't buy them collars. They don't buy them baskets.



They don't buy them treats. They don't buy them food. They don't buy them feeding bowls.

They don't reward them. They don't provide them with a balanced diet. They don't control them. They don't check the state of their health.

They don't provide any bedding. They don't change their bedding.

They don't check their teeth. They don't clean their teeth. They don't pay them any attention.

They don't care for them.

They don't house-train them. They don't clip their coat.

They don't get insurance for them. They don't stroke them.

They don't clean up their urine. They don't clean up their faeces. They don't clean up their vomit.

They don't clean their ears. They don't clean their eyes. They don't buy them toys.

They don't detect injuries. They don't detect disease.

They don't treat injuries. They don't treat disease.

They don't provide any shelter for them.

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If you're not prepared to do all of the above, please don't do one more thing: don't give a home to a pet.

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## Car was 'lethal weapon' for schizophrenic

NICHOLAS TIMMINS  
Public Policy Editor

Clarification over the rights and duties of doctors to report seriously mentally ill patients to the driving licence authority is to be sought after a paranoid schizophrenic killed a young mother in a car in a London car park.

An inquiry published yesterday into the case of Nilesh Gadher, 37, a paranoid schizophrenic with a history of violence and of failing to take his medication, lists a catalogue of errors in his care. They culmi-

nated because of fears over his mental health.

His condition deteriorated, he left a rehabilitation work project, he was not taking his medication and he set out to work as a mini-cab driver. But despite a warning six months before from his father and brother that he could kill himself or someone else, and despite complaints from neighbours over his behaviour and evident deterioration, a social worker decided Gadher did not meet the criteria for compulsory treatment.

But the inquiry said it was also concerned that Gadher was able to buy and drive a car, possibly with fare-paying passengers in it, while in his psychotic state. "The fact of the matter is that a car is every bit as lethal a weapon in the wrong hands at the wrong time as a firearm," the inquiry chaired by Judge Main said.

A patient admitted to hospital with a psychosis has a duty to inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, which can revoke the licence, and should be advised by doctors not to drive. But there is nothing in law to prevent someone driving against advice the inquiry said, although it "may be appropriate" for the doctor to tell the DVLA.

Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow Health Authority, which with Ealing Council commissioned the report, said however there were issues over patient confidentiality in doctors reporting patients. "We will be asking the departments of health and transport to clarify the ethics and law in this area and to change the law if necessary," a spokesman said.

The DVLA said there was no legal requirement on doctors to tell them if a patient was considered too ill to drive, although some doctors did in fact contact the agency. A spokeswoman said there was a reluctance to in-

roduce compulsion because the issue of patient confidentiality was "a very sensitive area".

The inquiry concluded that the magnitude of the tragedy was not predictable. But it was predictable that Gadher would stop taking his medication and that if unwell he might become violent. It might have been prevented if he had been re-admitted hospital or prevented from driving.

At the time consultants and nurses faced excessive workloads and an inadequate range of services. More cash has been provided - but despite "strenuous efforts" the trust has been unable to appoint an additional consultant despite funds being available.



The golden age of steam lives on: Martin Prior working on a signal box in his garden in Sutton St Nicholas, Hereford and Worcester, where he designs, makes and sells life-size replicas of steam-age railway buildings and engines. Photograph: Rob Stratton



Sanita Kaura: Killed by Gadher driving in car park

nated in him killing Sanita Kaura, 27, the mother of a young baby, when he struck her while driving at up to 45 mph in the car park. He was judged unfit to stand trial.

He had been in hospital four times since 1984 but was discharged to the community in March 1994 under a plan which the inquiry says was "doomed to fail" and "naïve at best". A consultant psychiatrist misunderstood the law and did not know that Gadher could be de-

## 'Road-rage' victim rejects publicity

A man beaten over the head with a metal bar because he did not say thank you to a driver is withholding his identity because he did not want to frighten his three young children.

The 31-year-old man, from Norris Green, Liverpool, faces further surgery as he still cannot see in his right eye but doctors hope he will regain his sight.

The man had dropped his children at a relative's home in Liverpool and was crossing a road at about 6pm on Friday when a newish looking black Vauxhall Cavalier slowed to let him cross. Its driver waved him on but when he was almost across he felt a heavy blow to his back.

He turned to see the driver, a 6ft tall skinhead in his 20s, attacking him with a 3ft long scaffolding bar. He struck him across the right side of his head knocking him to the ground.

The driver told him: "Next

time say thanks", and got back in his car. The injured man was found staggering along the road and taken to the Royal Liverpool hospital. He suffered three fractures above his right eye socket and had bone removed.

A police spokesman said yesterday that the pedestrian could not see at present because of the injury, but medical staff are hopeful that he will get sight back in the eye.

"He does not want his name released. He said he didn't want his children to know he has been assaulted in this way because he didn't want to put fear in them," the spokesman added.

"It is a shame when people can't just cross the road to go to a chip shop without being attacked like this. Road rage is quite new and we have had no similar incidents in the area but this is particularly shocking when you consider that it was unprovoked."

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The winning coverage in question was Channel 4 News' reports on war crimes in former Yugoslavia.



BAFTA Best News Coverage 1995.

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**ITN**

John 1:25



United Nations weapons review: Geneva conference to be told of change in policy

## Britain to support ban on land-mines

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY  
Defence Correspondent

Britain is today expected to announce a change in its policy on anti-personnel land-mines, and to tell the United Nations Weapons Convention Review Conference which opened in Geneva yesterday that it will support a world-wide ban on their manufacture, export and use.

The move follows indications that senior members of the United States military favour a total ban, and studies by the Red Cross and other independent organisations which cast doubt on the military effectiveness of anti-personnel mines.

The first session of the review conference in September 1995 banned the use and transfer of laser weapons specifically designed to blind people – the first time that a specific new kind of weapon had been banned since 1868. It failed to reach a decision on anti-personnel mines.

An estimated 100 million anti-personnel mines are scattered across the world, and they cause an estimated 30,000 casualties a year, mostly to farmers, other civilians and children. They also kill livestock. Experts estimate the plague of anti-personnel land-mines is now hindering development and reconstruction in more than 35 countries. There are an estimated 4 million mines in Bosnia, but they have taken their heaviest toll in Cambodia. In both cases the conflicts in which they were laid are now over but their scourge remains.

Until now the British government has supported the view that anti-personnel mines remain a legitimate weapon of war. They were intended to protect the larger anti-tank mines against at-

tempts to clear them. Whereas anti-tank mines are fairly easy to detect and require a heavy weight to set them off, anti-personnel mines are often made from plastic and other undetectable materials. They are not designed to kill outright, but to inflict horrible wounds, especially to the legs and genitals, which, besides crippling the victims, overload the medical services.

However, "dual-use" mines, which can destroy vehicles and maim and kill, are increasingly available. The Red Cross is opposing the definition of anti-personnel mines as those "primarily designed" to maim or kill people, as this could render any future agreement ambiguous. It believes all mines should be detectable and that "anti-handling devices" – booby traps – should be prohibited.

Britain recently faced isolation among the more developed countries following a statement by the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, that he was "inclined to eliminate all anti-personnel land-mines". General Norman Schwarzkopf, who commanded the victorious Allied forces in the 1991 Gulf war, also signed an open letter to President Bill Clinton supporting a total ban. Germany recently renounced anti-personnel mines as a weapon it would use in war.

British diplomatic sources yesterday stressed that the reluctance to sign up to a total ban was due to doubts about whether it would work. The countries which still export anti-personnel land-mines – China, India and Pakistan – have not signed up to any restrictions. Russia has signed a three-year moratorium on anti-personnel mines which do not destroy themselves after a given period.



Call for ban: 2,000 pairs of shoes in Sergels Square, Stockholm, representing the victims injured by land-mines every month, placed by the Swedish Red Cross on Saturday, the international day of protest against mines. Photograph: Reuters

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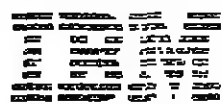
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## Bus firm wins rail franchise

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR  
Transport Correspondent

The sixth privatised rail franchise, the InterCity services out of St Pancras, was yesterday awarded to National Express, the bus company which has already won the right to run the Gatwick Express rail shuttle.

National Express won a 10-year deal with the promise of extra services and new trains. Although initially it will receive more than £16.5m in subsidy – £6.5m more than currently being paid to British Rail, by the end of the 10-year franchise it has committed itself to paying £10m for the right to run the services. The franchise for Midland Main Line, covers services between London St Pancras and Wellingborough, Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham, Derby and Sheffield.

While not committing itself to the existing timetable, National Express says it will "be maintaining broadly the current level of service for the first three years" and that by 1999, once new trains had been leased, there would be substantial increases in the timetable. For example, according to Roger Salmon, the franchising director, there will be "10 more services each weekday to and from Derby, 10 each weekday for Nottingham and 22 for Leicester".

## MPs battle over reform of Church

ANDREW BROWN  
Religious Affairs Correspondent

The Church of England was threatened yesterday with a parliamentary scrutiny of its finances and organisation by the Commons Social Security Committee, which is examining changes in pensions policy proposed by the General Synod.

This apparently arcane topic has revived tensions between the General Synod and a minority of MPs passionately interested in church affairs, among them Frank Field, Labour MP for Birkenhead who chairs the committee.

Mr Field believes that the church should reform itself by means of a Bill, which Parliament can modify, and not by a measure, which is a law that Parliament can only accept or reject as a whole.

Philip Mawer, the General Synod's secretary-general, told the committee that removing the administration of clergy pensions from the Church Commissioners was necessary if the laity were to pay their share. The commissioners, who manage the Church of England's assets, lost £800m in property speculation in the late Eighties. He said a "fundamental shift" was taking place in church funding, with parishes and dioceses taking on more of the burden.

## Child agency given boost to its image

The Child Support Agency made "dramatic improvements" last year, the Government claimed yesterday as it launched a new offensive in the propaganda battle to turn round the agency's disastrous image, writes John Renton.

Publishing an end-of-year report which showed that the CSA had exceeded three of its five key performance targets, Andrew Mitchell, a junior social security minister, claimed the agency was "well on its way to providing a high-quality service for all its clients".

But Malcolm Wicks, Labour's spokesman on the CSA, said: "They are improving from such an abysmally low

base that it is hardly a triumph of good public administration."

The CSA collected or arranged £302m of maintenance payments in the last financial year (against a £300m target), 79 per cent of which were correct to the last penny (75 per cent), and 97 per cent of payments received from absent parents were passed on to the parents looking after children within 10 working days (90 per cent).

But the agency managed to process only 48 per cent of new applications for maintenance within six months, as against its target of 60 per cent. The highly-critical report will be debated by MPs tomorrow.

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ITN



10  
international

Italian election: Red flag flies again after 50 years as Olive Tree coalition sees off Berlusconi and pledges a new stability

Victorious left  
promises era  
of co-operationANDREW GUMBEL  
Rome

"We've waited 50 years for this moment," clamoured Massimo D'Alema, leader of Italy's main left-wing party, the PDS. The time was yesterday and an ecstatic centre-left was celebrating its landmark general election victory in the heart of Rome. The crowd roared with approval.

Mr D'Alema's party has travelled a long way towards the political centre since its birth out of the ashes of the old Communist Party six years ago, but under the circumstances, he could not resist a throwback to the old tradition. "Finally we have brought this symbol into government," he said, standing on the balcony of the party's historic headquarters on the Via delle Botteghe Oscure and waving a hammer-and-sickle flag. A crowd began chanting "Enrico, Enrico" in memory of Enrico Berlinguer, the visionary Communist leader of the 1970s who spent his life trying unsuccessfully to forge a "historic compromise" to bring his party to power alongside the Christian Democrats.

What Mr Berlinguer failed to

achieve during the Cold war, however, Mr D'Alema has managed in its messy aftermath. The victorious Olive Tree coalition, linking the PDS with a myriad of centrist, Christian Democrat and environmentalist groups, is really the historic compromise made flesh.

Mr D'Alema has been its architect, but a moderate economics professor, Romano Prodi, has the task of forming the next government. The Olive Tree won an absolute majority in the Senate, the upper house of parliament, and pulled significantly ahead of Silvio Berlusconi's Freedom Alliance in the Chamber of Deputies.

In the lower house, however, Mr Prodi will have to rely on at least the tacit support of one of two protest groups - the far-left Rifondazione Comunista, with which the Olive Tree had an electoral pact, and the volatile Northern League, which outstripped all expectations by garnering some 11 per cent of the national vote.

Despite the fragility of the result, a wave of euphoria swept over the country indicating the arrival of something truly new in Italian politics. The financial markets reacted by marking up

the value of the much-hattered lira, and the outgoing prime minister, Lamberto Dini, an ally of Mr Prodi's, was confident interest rates would soon fall.

What was immediately noticeable was a sharp change in tone, from the aggressive, almost paranoid rantings of Mr Berlusconi and his allies in the neo-fascist National Alliance, to the conciliatory tones of the Olive Tree. Apart from his one nostalgic reference to the past, Mr D'Alema was quick to point out that aggression and the desire for revenge were not part of the new political culture.

Faced with cries of "Let's put Berlusconi in jail!", Mr D'Alema retorted: "No - that's the way the right behaves, not us." Mr Prodi, meanwhile, pledged cross-party talks on constitutional reform to end Italy's chronic instability.

The Freedom Alliance, by contrast, found it extraordinarily difficult to concede defeat. Mr Berlusconi, who has scarcely been off the television screens for two years, did not react until last night, when he claimed unconvincedly his side had in fact won more votes. Earlier he was reported to have said "see you all abroad", perhaps



Fruits of victory: Romano Prodi, leader of the centre-left Olive Tree coalition, is besieged by the media in Rome

Photograph: Bruno Mosconi

less of a joke than it sounds given his deepening problems with anti-corruption magistrates. The biggest disappointment on the right was for Gianfranco Fini's reformed neo-fascists, who had hoped to reach 20 per cent of the vote, putting them level or even ahead of Mr Berlusconi's Forza Italia. But

they wound up with just 15 per cent, five points behind Forza. The result was particularly awkward for Mr Fini, who singlehandedly provoked the election by pulling out of all-party talks on constitutional reform in February. His push for a presidential style of government, which had made considerable

headway in the negotiations, is now likely to be replaced with a less centralised, less radical kind of reform.

The first job of the new parliament, which will not convene until 9 May, will be to elect speakers in the two chambers. Only then can formal talks on forming a government take

place, although by then it should be reasonably clear what shape the new administration will take.

Early indications suggest Mr Prodi as prime minister, his number two Walter Veltroni as deputy, Mr Dini as either treasury or foreign minister, and the anti-Mafia magistrate Luciano

Violante as justice minister. One key job will be the minister of posts and telecommunications, responsible for broadcasting. Mr Berlusconi could well lose one or more of his three television channels.

Leading article, page 16  
Comment, page 17  
Hamish McRae, page 22

## 'Braveheart' in League of his own

ANDREW GUMBEL  
Rome

If you want to understand what really happened in Italy's general election, ask Mel Gibson. Or rather, marvel at the timing with which his film *Braveheart* swept the Oscars last month. His tale of William Wallace's revolt against the English provided the Northern League, the volatile separatist movement that rails against the iniquities of rule from Rome, with the perfect symbol for its poll campaign.

Having been written off as a spent force, they were back yesterday with more than 10 per cent of the vote and 59 seats in the Chamber of Deputies - twice as many as they had dreamed of capturing.

The man with the power to make or break Romano Prodi's incipient centre-left government is the League's quibbling leader, Umberto "Braveheart" Bossi, 54, who thrives on his unkempt appearance and thuggish manner. He has been the thorn in the establishment's side for

years, playing a big role toppling the old governing parties in the early 1990s and, two years ago, joining and toppling the conservative coalition government headed by Silvio Berlusconi.

Quite what he stands for is not clear. Ostensibly, he wants to split the affluent north from the rest of the country and set up an independent republic. But Mr Bossi is too intelligent to take full separatism entirely seriously. Certainly he wants to diminish the corrupt and inefficient influence of Rome.

His real interest though is to shake up the establishment and make sure it does not settle into its lazy old ways. He is a one-man vanguard of the revolution, and a consummate political strategist. As such, he has attracted a massive protest vote, especially in the north, where disillusion with Mr Berlusconi runs high and the centre-left is viewed with suspicion. "We won't be to parliament just as benevolent onlookers," Mr Bossi said yesterday. "We in the League are fighters."

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Aftermath of Qana massacre: The Israeli attack has undermined Clinton's initiative at Sharm el-Sheikh to tackle 'terrorism'

## US faces long haul to peace in Middle East

PATRICK COCKBURN  
Jerusalem

A cruel American cartoon shows two ageing US diplomats sitting on a park bench in Washington, studying a newspaper filled with news of the war in Lebanon. One of the State Department veterans shakes his head sadly and says: "It wouldn't have happened if Warren Christopher was alive."

Mr Christopher, the US Secretary of State, may prove the cynics wrong in the next few days by winning a ceasefire in Lebanon, but it is an uphill job. "We think we have a chance of putting a deal together this week," said Nicholas Burns, the State Department spokesman in Damascus yesterday, as Mr Christopher met President Hafez al-Assad. "Success is not assured. We'll stay as long as it is useful."

It is Mr Christopher's 19th time in Syria since he took office and it is by far his most important visit. There is more at stake here than an end to the fighting in Lebanon. In under two weeks Israel's Operation Grapes of Wrath, backed by the US until the Qana massacre, has put at risk the main American policy aims in the Middle East.

And it all happened so quickly. Only last month the US seemed to be at the peak of its influence in the region. In the wake of the suicide bombings in Israel in March President Bill Clinton assembled 27 world leaders in Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt, including leaders from the Arab world, to attend a conference to show their solidarity with Israel. Few would have attended without US prompting.

All this is at risk because of Grapes of Wrath and the rain of explosives on south Lebanon. Yevgeny Primakov, the Russian Foreign Minister, at a rare meeting with Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, told him: "Your attacks in Lebanon are without proportion to Hizbollah activity and, in the end, you have hardly killed any Hizbollah members, but have killed hundreds of civilians. If you sought to convene the Sharm el-Sheikh conference today, the heads of state would not come."

The damage to US policy is even deeper than that. Grapes of Wrath has poisoned the political atmosphere in the Middle East as a whole. Initial American endorsement of the operation is damaging the "peace process" by which hostility between Israel and the Arabs would be defused in a Middle East which is largely under the hegemony of the US since the end of the Gulf war in 1991.

Between Israel and the Arabs would be defused in a Middle East which is largely under the hegemony of the US since the end of the Gulf war in 1991.

Syria and its ally Iran did not go to Sharm el-Sheikh but they appeared isolated in their opposition. No longer. The Syrian newspapers yesterday showed President Assad meeting five foreign ministers in one day. Iran also showed signs of breaking out of the isolation which the US is trying to impose on it. Ali Akbar Velayati, the Iranian Foreign Minister, held talks in Damascus with Mr Primakov and Hervé de Charette, the French Foreign Minister.

Worse, from the US point of view, none of this is helping Mr Peres win the election on 29 May - a central aim of President Clinton's policy.

### The EU endorsement

Luxembourg (AP) - The European Union yesterday endorsed both the French and US plans to end fighting between Israel and Hizbollah guerrillas in south Lebanon.

"The aim of these efforts must be to obtain, with an immediate halt to hostilities and acts of violence, the elaboration of a lasting agreement between Israel and the Hizbollah guerrillas," EU ministers said.

They also stuck by their "critical dialogue" with Iran, ignoring US appeals to isolate Tehran.

Clinton, Sharm el-Sheikh was aimed at fostering the political survival of Mr Peres after the suicide bombings. But the latest polls show that Grapes of Wrath is not helping the prime minister. His lead over Benjamin Netanyahu, his rival for the prime minister's office, is only 5 per cent. Many Israeli-Arabs, one of Labour's key constituencies, say they will abstain.

In a sense Mr Clinton gave a warning at Sharm el-Sheikh about what was going to happen. He pledged support for Israel in combating the "terrorists" of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hizbollah. Hamas and Islamic Jihad are Palestinian movements which carried out the suicide bomb attacks in Jerusalem, Ashkelon and Tel Aviv. But Hizbollah is purely Lebanese. It carried out some successful ambushes in the last month and

has killed 77 Israeli soldiers in the last three years. Israeli casualties had not increased markedly in recent months.

In the wake of Sharm el-Sheikh, Israel and the US appeared intent on teaching Syria a lesson. Viewed from Damascus, Operation Grapes of Wrath may appear to be the latest in a series of hostile moves by Washington and Tel Aviv. In the last six months Jordan has turned against its old friends in Iraq and has successfully cultivated Israel and the US. Equally menacing for Syria is the military agreement signed by Israel with Turkey, allowing Israeli aircraft to train in Turkish airspace.

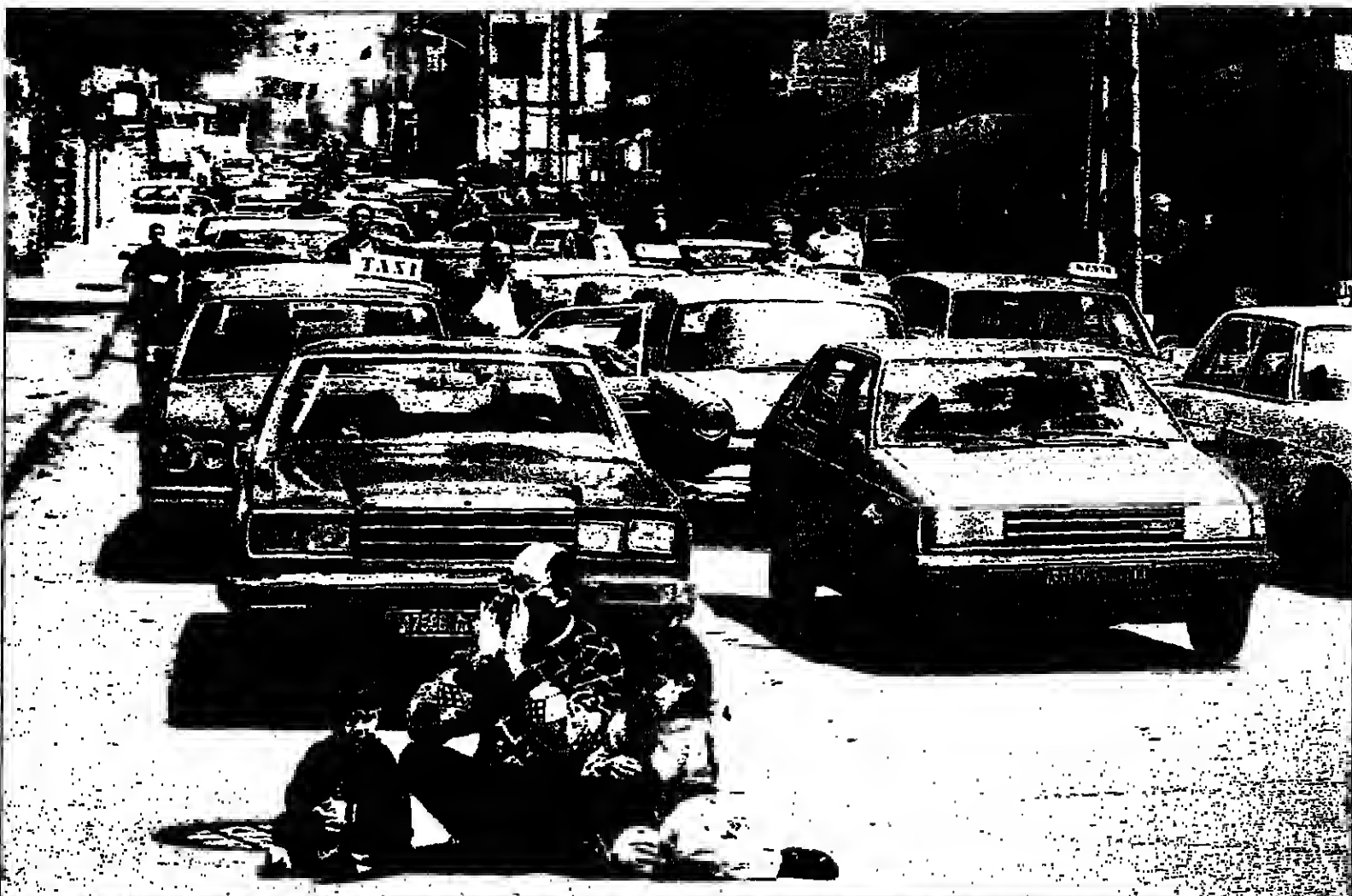
Fearing encirclement by allies of Israel and the US, Syria is unlikely to stand down the 3,000 guerrillas of Hizbollah in south Lebanon. The ability to end the skirmishing in the Israeli occupation is a card so valuable that Damascus will cash it in as part of a final peace agreement with Israel.

Despite the massive destruction inflicted by Grapes of Wrath, Israeli military intelligence admits that the guerrillas have suffered little, and were never likely to do so unless Israel had launched a ground offensive.

It may be that Sharm el-Sheikh created a lethal hubris in Israel and the US. Only this explains why they re-entered the Lebanese political swamp on 11 April, despite their experiences in the 1980s. When Mr Christopher arrived in Damascus on Saturday he spoke of a quick ceasefire. It has not happened. The problem is that the campaign launched by Mr Peres has already failed. The Katyusha rockets that he promised to stop are still falling. But he dare not admit failure because this might lose him the election.

Only the US can now save Mr Peres. Iran, Syria and Hizbollah know that every day Grapes of Wrath continues it damages Israel and the US more than them. They also have cards still to play. Hizbollah has not yet made ground attacks which will cause casualties among Israeli forces. Another Qana massacre is possible. Underestimating the political effect of Grapes of Wrath may turn out to be the worst miscalculation by the US in the Middle East since the American ambassador to Iraq went on holiday a few days before Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait.

Letters, page 16



Nation in mourning: Traffic stops in Beirut as a man and his son observe the minute's silence for those killed in Israeli attacks Photograph: AP

## Hizbollah profits from nation's fury

Lebanese Muslims and Christians are at one with guerrillas against Israel and US, reports Robert Fisk



To understand how the Lebanese felt, you only had to watch the car which drove down Baalbek Street yesterday with four large yellow and green Hizbollah flags - complete with the word "Allah" - and a band holding a Kalashnikov rifle - flapping above it from makeshift flagpoles.

On the bonnet and boot, there were two equally large glass boxes half filled with paper currency. "Give for the Islamic Resistance," was hand-written on the side. And out of shops and houses, men and women - well-dressed, many of them middle class and very definitely not religious fanatics - walked, unsmiting, to put money in the boxes.

Never before have such scenes been witnessed on the streets of Beirut. Previously despised by many Lebanese - especially those who are not of the Shia Muslim faith - the Hizbollah has, thanks to Israel, suddenly come of age. The Israeli offensive against civilians - which continued yesterday when an Israeli gunboat fired at an ambulance on the coastal highway north of Sidon, causing the driver to lose control and badly injure a pedestrian - has united Muslims and Christians in almost unprecedented fury.

In both Muslim and Christian areas of Beirut, the Lebanese have tied black ribbons to their car radio aerials in memory of the 110 civilians slaughtered by the Israelis in the UN compound at Qana. Outside mosques, clerics have pasted newspaper photographs of the bloodbath and prayers for the dead. A national day of mourning yesterday closed down shops, banks and government buildings across the country while at midday, many Lebanese observed a minute's silence in memory of the 200 or so civilians killed by the Israelis.

They include, of course, not only the men, women and children of Qana but a four-day-old baby killed with 11 members of her family by an Israeli helicopter attack on her home in Nabatieh, three children and two women in an ambulance that was deliberately targeted by another Israeli helicopter pilot in southern Lebanon, a two-year-old girl decapitated by an

Israeli missile in Beirut and three sisters cut down by Israeli shells in the southern Bekaa. Only eight Hizbollah guerrillas are believed to have died.

Nor has the Christian community - traditionally friendly to the West and once allies of the Israelis - been spared. An elderly Christian Maronite was killed when an Israeli air raid inexplicably struck his totally Christian village in the Bekaa, while two Christian Maronite Lebanese army soldiers were killed by an Israeli helicopter pilot in southern Lebanon. The soldiers were driving near Tihnin when their car was chased by the helicopter. The two men jumped from their vehicle, waving their arms and pointing to their US-made uniforms, then ran into a house for protection. The Israeli pilot then fired a laser-guided missile into the building, killing them both.

Almost equally shocking for the Christian community was

the sabotage attack by the Israelis on two of Lebanon's main power stations, both in Christian Maronite areas where no Hizbollah would ever dare to visit. The power cuts - the country now only receives six hours of electricity a day - affect Muslims and Christians equally. It was only because of a Lebanese government prohibition that Christian students dressed in black were prevented from staging a demonstration outside the US embassy in east Beirut to mark "the end of the New World Order".

Not a Lebanese believes that the Qana massacre was an accident. "I used to hate the Hizbollah," a student of hotel management told me yesterday, his voice steadily rising in anger. "But now I admire them. They are the only guys with the guts to stand up to the Israelis and keep shooting. Not even the Palestinians did that. They say that Peres had to do this in or-

der to win the election. And the Americans say there will only be a Middle East peace if Peres wins the election. So you mean all this is for peace? You mean that Peres has to slaughter all these people to win the election and save peace? We Lebanese have to die for your peace."

Alone in its optimism, the opposition newspaper *Al-Diyar* predicted that the birth of a new and united Lebanon would follow the latest Israeli onslaught. "The [Israeli] strike is targeting all of Lebanon," the paper said. "... No better show of national unity have we ever witnessed." But other papers emphasised the supine response of other Arab nations and the failure of the US to condemn the savagery of the Israeli attacks.

In the streets of Beirut, Westerners - even those who have lived here many years - are receiving the kind of quizzical, suspicious glances from old acquaintances and scarcely suppressed hostility from strangers that symbolises the depth of animosity again growing towards Israel's onslaught. One of them showed Mr Peres harvesting the "Grapes of Wrath" after which the current operation is so shamefully named. Each grape is a human skull.

## Artillery bombardment 'defied orders'

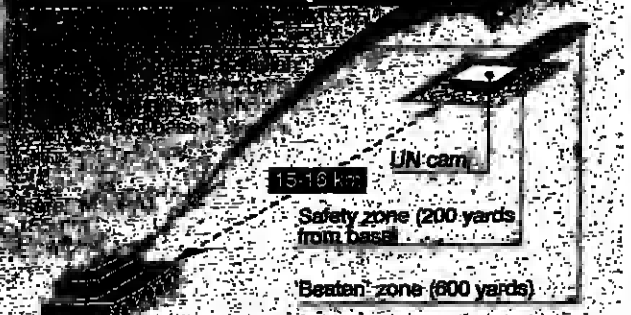
CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY  
Defence Correspondent

Israeli artillery which shelled the UN base at Qana in southern Lebanon, killing 110 Lebanese refugees, ignored the "safety ring" marked around UN bases, in defiance of standing orders, the *Independent* has learned.

The Israeli guns were firing at near-maximum range - 10 miles - and firing over the UN base at Hizbollah rocket launchers 300 yards to the north. At that range, Israeli sources said, the natural dispersion of shells in an elliptical pattern along the line of fire led some to fall short.

The UN military adviser to the Secretary-General, General Frank van Kappen, arrived in Beirut on Friday, the day after the Qana shelling, to conduct an investigation into the attack. He will also visit Jerusalem before submitting his report.

### How Israel shelled Qana



The UN said yesterday that six 155mm shells landed within the UN base. Between 50 and 70 shells landed in the Qana area during that day.

Israeli sources denied suggestions that the attack on the UN base was deliberate. Although both the UN and the Israeli Defence Forces have not yet completed formal investigations, it now looks likely that

the artillery commander on the spot will be blamed for ignoring the safety margin around the known Fijian UN base at Qana and firing too hastily on the position from which Hizbollah had fired a number of BM-21 rockets.

It now seems clear that the Israelis fired as quickly as possible, to hit the Hizbollah gunners before they could escape,

and did not fire ranging shots. Had the Hizbollah position been to one side of the UN base, relative to the position of the guns, there might not have been a problem. However, the UN said the Hizbollah position was directly north of the UN base, only 300 yards away.

The M109A1 self-propelled howitzers used by the Israelis have a maximum range of about 18km, and were, according to Israeli sources, firing from 15km or 16 km. At that range, the shells will spread across a "blast zone" along the line of fire. Some will land short or beyond the target.

Had the Israelis observed the "safety ring", they would not have risked some of the shells falling into the UN base. It appears that on this occasion a local commander may have ignored the standing orders which have a "safety ring" around each known UN site.

The UN has had troops in the Qana base for 18 years.

According to UN sources in Lebanon, the Israeli shells were fitted with M732 radar fuses, which detonate them at 7m off the ground, the most lethal possible height, blasting fragments downwards to amputate, maim and kill.

The Israelis were using a US-built radar system, "Firefinder", to detect and plot the launch of the Hizbollah rockets. The radar will plot the position to within a ten-figure grid reference. This is then keyed into the fire control computer, which will produce settings for each of the guns distributed around the firing positions, so that their fire will converge on the target. However, at near-maximum range there will still be some dispersion. The Israeli sources also suggested the coordinates may not have been transcribed accurately.

## Satellites to fight South African 'carjackers'

Johannesburg (Reuters) - A hi-tech satellite tracking system used to recover stolen cars is being introduced in the country that needs it most - violent crime-ridden South Africa, police said yesterday.

"This is the clearest indication by the state of its commitment to eradicate hijacking and motor theft using the latest and most effective technology available," the security minister Sydney Mufamadi said.

A hidden device on the car can be located by satellite once the owner has reported the theft to the police. The use of the new technology in the US and elsewhere has radically improved the recovery rate of stolen vehicles.

South African motorists live in fear of the car hijacker, who can strike at city-centre traffic lights, out in the country or at the electric gates to their often burgled homes.

Usually, armed gangs force the driver to hand over the still-running car. For good measure, they often shoot the victim.

Previous innovations to make cars more hijack-proof, such as immobilisers that make the engine cut out after a few minutes if the car has not been started with the proper procedure, have only made the ordeal of hijacking more horrific.

The criminals now often take the driver with them until they are sure they know all about the car's security systems.

## Crowd trouble in Bosnia

Banja Luka (Reuters) - Rival factions in Bosnia are encouraging dangerous confrontations in which crowds of refugees try to cross true lines to reach their former homes, UN workers and Nato officers said yesterday.

Both Serb and Muslim-Croat power-brokers were promoting incidents involving embittered civilians for their own political ends, Nato officers said, despite a serious risk the events could turn bloody.

Peacekeeping forces fired into the air and deployed troops between angry crowds at Doboj on Sunday in the latest incident in which refugees have massed at post-war boundary lines between Serb territory and the Muslim-Croat federation. "This is how the war started - people marching and setting up

barricades," a Danish officer in the Nato-led I-For force said. Nato officials in Sarajevo warned the primary responsibility for dealing with such confrontations lies with local civil authorities. "We clearly understand and support the right of individuals to return to their pre-war homes and to visit family graves," a Nato spokesman, Major Simon Haselock, said.

"[But] we are concerned by what seems to be a cynical attempt to manipulate the legitimate concerns of people about their property and homesteads for narrow, local ends. We are not going to become a rent-a-crowd-control organisation."

In most of the demonstrations, Bosnian Muslim authorities - including police in civilian clothes - have led refugees to-

wards towns from which they were expelled in the war. Serb authorities have replied by organising protests stopping Muslim refugees entering Serb territory, say relief workers.

The confrontations give Bosnian Serb leaders an excuse to strengthen police powers and rally support against a "common enemy".

Leaders of the Muslim-Croat federation are promoting the demonstrations citing the Dayton peace agreement which guarantees repatriation and freedom of movement across Bosnia. However, international relief workers say the ruling Party of Democratic Action is keen to stage the marches because they also drum up support among refugees angered by the loss of homes.

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## international

## Liberia

THE WAR AT THE  
END OF THE WORLD

In the second of our series, Philippa Atkinson examines the effects of outside interference

# Conflict heightened by Western meddling

When Graham Greene visited Liberia in 1934, he was confused by the seemingly impenetrable political scene. "It will be seen," he wrote, "that Liberian politics are complicated." The last six years of civil war in this small sub-tropical country have certainly been complicated. The five different factions, three transitional governments and 13 peace agreements have made it, for many, too complicated even to try to understand.

But the causes matter, because Liberia's descent into chaos is not accidental. The collapse into economic warfare and factional fighting for political control can at least partly be attributed to the hostility of the US and Nigeria to Charles Taylor.

It started on Christmas Eve 1989, when Charles Taylor entered Liberia in the last of the many attempts to end the autocratic rule of President Samuel Doe. In just six months, Taylor's forces, swelled by support from those targeted by Doe's brutal regime, had reached Monrovia, with the national army, the AFL, staging a strategic retreat. The war lasted only 10 months, and the ceasefire – negotiated in November 1990 – held for two years between Taylor's NPFL and Ecomog, the West African peacekeeping force.

Taylor controlled all of Liberia outside Monrovia, and, in the capital, an interim government ruled, with security provided by Ecomog. The country was divided, and a political stalemate precluded any early hopes of disarmament.

During this time, Taylor built up both a viable economy in

Greater Liberia and popular support. The war had been marked by horrific violence, with groups associated with Doe's government being subject to summary and mass executions. But by early 1991 the violence was under control, and no new refugee flows occurred during this period.

The economy was supported by exports of rubber and logs from the main port of Buchanan. Taylor studied economics in the US and this education was perhaps reflected in his policies, which called on foreign concessions to pay wages in US dollars and taxes in kind. One company was asked to provide passenger buses for the Gbarnga-Kakata route, while the largest logging company in Buchanan provided electricity for the city.

The importance of Taylor's policies and the stability of his rule in Greater Liberia have only been recognised in retrospect. At the time, the US government, worried about Taylor's links with Libya, allied itself with the Nigerian component of Ecomog and its attempts to weaken Taylor's control.

Neither country was willing to let Taylor take over – the Nigerians because the then President Babangida had been a close associate and relative of Doe. While diplomatic and aid officials in Liberia now discuss Taylor's charisma, his consistency and his economic degree, back then the talk was of the atrocities committed by his fighters, his cocaine habit and his megalomania.

Ecomog is widely acknowledged to have conducted a covert campaign against Taylor



Worldly goods: A family carry abandoned furniture home yesterday after two weeks marooned in a barracks in Monrovia

Photograph: AFP

during the ceasefire, through its support and funding of Ulimo, a new rebel army set up among Krahn and Mandingo refugees. These groups, leading political and business players under Doe, had been forced to flee for their lives in 1990, but, having amassed both contacts and wealth regrouped in Sierra Leone and Guinea.

By mid-1992 Ulimo were, with the help of Ecomog, driving Taylor's NPFL out of the diamond-rich areas of western Liberia. Refugees fleeing this area to Monrovia reported seeing Ulimo troops wearing Ecomog uniforms. Western Liberia has been controlled ever since by Ulimo and Ecomog, and the

latest problems in Monrovia were partly sparked by infighting in January between Ecomog and Ulimo-J (the Krahn faction) over diamond mines near Tubmanburg.

During 1992, Ecomog was deployed around the country in accordance with the first peace agreement, the Yamoussoukro Accords. But Taylor refused to disarm to a non-neutral force, calling continuously for a small UN presence. In November 1992, he finally attacked Monrovia. "Operation Octopus" was strongly resisted by Ecomog, which bombed civilian areas to repel the NPFL attacks. Ecomog formed an open coalition with Ulimo and rearm

the AFL. Its actions, including direct attacks on an aid warehouse and convoy, were given the full backing of the UN Security Council in March 1993, when Boutros Boutros-Ghali praised the regional approach to conflict resolution.

The proliferation of warlords has made it much harder to resolve the conflict. Taylor's hands are not clean, and his motives may not be pure, but he alone has demonstrated a capability of creating some order. As one Liberian put it: "Why didn't you guys just let Taylor take over from the start – let him take what he's gonna get anyway, and save us five years of suffering."

## Fear of cholera epidemic as the clean-up begins

Monrovia (Reuters) – A huge clean-up began yesterday after two weeks of fighting with health workers hating to contain outbreaks of disease.

All over the city people came out to help. A group of boys piled rubbish around a decomposed body wearing a motorcycle helmet, ready to burn it.

With the fighting over, epidemics pose the main threat. Thousands displaced by the fighting lack clean drinking water and makeshift clinics are

treating hundreds of suspected cases of cholera.

A team of US diplomats was due in Monrovia to join efforts to ensure that the ceasefire leads to a lasting peace.

West African Ecomog peacekeepers have been deployed around the city's main army barracks, where thousands of people were trapped by the fighting.

Washington has promised \$30m of equipment, training and aid to Ecomog if it plays a "neutral and effective role".

## Prosecutor drops spy case against former Polish PM

Warsaw (Reuters) – The prosecutor investigating allegations that the former prime minister Jozef Oleksy spied for Moscow said yesterday he would not proceed with the case, as the evidence was inadequate. "I decided to drop this case," Slawomir Gorzkiewicz, a military prosecutor, said.

Mr Oleksy has consistently denied the allegations, levelled by Poland's security service and

announced to parliament in December by the outgoing interior minister, Andrzej Milczanowski, who said the security service (UOP) had evidence Mr Oleksy knowingly informed for foreign intelligence since before the 1989 fall of Communism until last year, when he was speaker of parliament. It later emerged Mr Milczanowski meant Soviet and Russian spies.

Mr Oleksy, once a senior

Communist, quit as prime minister when the prosecutors launched a three-month investigation on 24 January, which they had to complete this week.

The furore shook the ruling coalition of Mr Oleksy's ex-Communist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and the Polish Peasant party, which only after tough negotiations formed a reshuffled cabinet under the SLD's Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz.

The affair broke just before the former president Lech Walesa, once the Solidarity union leader, handed over to his ex-Communist opponent Aleksander Kwasniewski, who had narrowly beaten him in November elections.

Mr Oleksy dubbed the allegations a "filthy provocation" by pro-Walesa UOP officers, admitting only to an innocent acquaintance with Vladimir

Alganov, a Warsaw-based Moscow diplomat, who later proved to be an intelligence officer. He and his successor at Russia's Warsaw embassy were also named in the prosecutor's investigation, but Mr Gorzkiewicz said no action would be taken against them either.

Parliamentary elections are due next year and Walesa is trying to rally the centre-right opposition for a comeback. He

attributed the outcome of the inquiry to expediency by the ex-Communists. "The political option in power was unable to do anything else with such an important problem. We will return to this matter after the parliamentary elections."

The SLD's core Social Democratic (SDRP) party made Mr Oleksy its leader after his resignation in a show of solidarity and confidence in his in-

nocence. He refused to comment yesterday but the decision was clearly a relief.

The SDRP deputy leader, Izabella Sierakowska, said that the party would push for Mr Milczanowski and others involved in bringing the allegations to be tried before a special state tribunal. "I think that in the nearest future... those who are guilty should be punished," she said.

### Dissident charged

Peking – Li Hai, 41, a Chinese dissident and student active in the 1989 pro-democracy movement, was arrested and charged with leaking state secrets, his mother said. He was accused of leaking state secrets, a crime for which he may face several years in prison.

### Monk jailed

Peking – Hang Meisheng, a Chinese monk, was sentenced to seven years' jail for selling fake entry tickets to his Great Brightness Temple in the eastern city of Yangzhou.

## This week in THE INDEPENDENT

This week and every week, Section Two has a new look, with more pages, new features, a daily radio column and an expanded listings section providing Britain's most comprehensive daily guide to going out.

### on Monday

A new regular section, Family Life, that deals with the interests and problems of parents and children. Julie Myerson's column also focuses on home life. Plus: a new series – Do we need? – which challenges the icons of modern Britain. And, every Monday unrivalled coverage of the expanding world of information technology in our Network pull-out section.

### on Tuesday

Health: how wearing a virtual reality helmet could help cure phobias and other psychological problems. Plus: flaky nails are not simply a problem for the vain

### on Wednesday

Bridget Jones's diary continues to chronicle the encounters and exquisite embarrassments in the life of Britain's most-read spinster. Plus: the midweek travel section, your money, finance

### on Thursday

All our regular features, including Virginia Ironside's Dilemmas, John Walsh's column, plus film, education

### on Friday

24Seven – a new 20-page pull-out-and-keep entertainment and listings section. Including a complete day-by-day planner for the week ahead, plus

### and in Sport

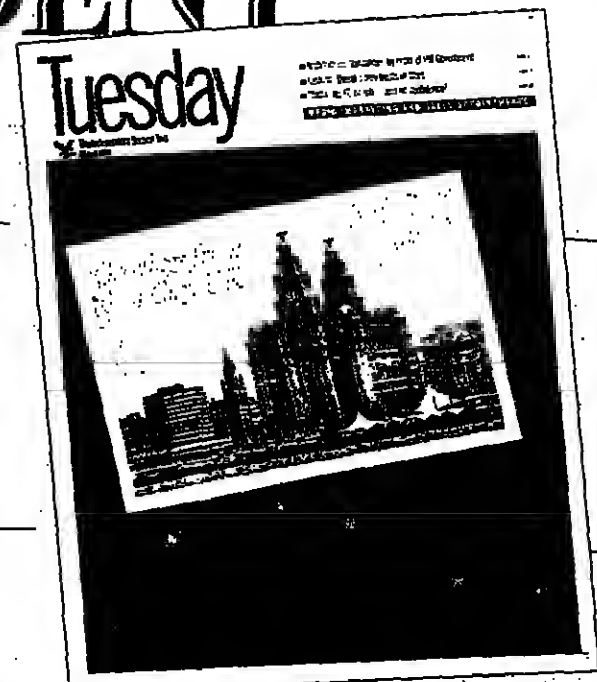
A 24-page tabloid section with all the action from the weekend's sporting action. Plus: the Monday interview in which a leading figure comes under the microscope, an unbeatable results service, gossip, speculation and fact from behind the scenes and the best in sports photography.

but a sign of ill-health, so what can be done about them? Also on Tuesday, fashion, architecture, visual arts and media.

and law. In our back pages, Martin Newell, Britain's leading rock poet, and Neil Kerber, one of the country's funniest cartoonists, present their views of the modern world.

and graduate plus. In the back pages, William Hartston's history of the world in 10 1/2 inches

seven-day TV, radio and satellite listings, ticket offers and informed comment on the week's highlights. Plus: eight pages of pop and classical music



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## obituaries / gazette

## Molly Keane

Molly Keane had an unusual place in contemporary literature, in writing very good plays and novels under two entirely separate identities at different times of her life.

She was a leading playwright in the 1930s whose work was directed by John Gielgud and produced by Binkie Beaumont, and she was an interesting novelist. But all the time she wrote under the pseudonym of "M.J. Farrell" and few outside her close circle knew who she really was. Then personal tragedy intervened, she stopped writing, and it was many years until, in 1981, the novel *Good Behaviour* was published under her own name, caused a sensation and just missed the Booker Prize. She became a celebrity both in Britain and in her home country, Ireland. Despite being well over 80 she continued to write, and *Loving and Giving* and *Time after Time*, both published later in the decade, are among her best work.

She was born Mary Skrine, in 1904, into a family whose roots lay in the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland, but she spent a good deal of her early childhood in Bath, in the big house at Claverton now occupied by the American Museum, a use she deplored, promoting a culture she had little time for. Her mother wrote under the name Moira O'Neill, and was a significant minor poet, her father a colonial governor of Mauritius. Her childhood was lonely and deeply unhappy, dominating by incompetent mothers and weedy fathers are frequent characters in her books. In adolescence and young adulthood she lived mostly in Ireland, and her time there was marked by the endless political turmoil following the 1916 Easter Rising and the Black and Tan war.

But her family area of East

Cork and Waterford was perhaps less dramatically affected by these events than some parts of the country, and after 1922 the traditional life of what were universally known as the Horse Protestants resumed, even if many participants were impoverished and had to resort to second-hand riding boots. It was in the comedy of these years, where a good deal of "nipping" between the bedrooms of the different sexes took place, that she found the raw material for her first books.

The importance of horses in this world cannot be overestimated. The same limited group of upper-class people met each other all over Ireland at the same events every year, sitting on the backs of these animals. But it was an expensive way to spend your time, even then, and the only reason Molly really started writing was to finance her obsessive hunting. Mills and Boon took her first effort, *Young Envy*, and she was, as she always put it, over the first fence. When funds were low she locked herself away in her parents' home, wrote a novel and with the few hundred pounds gained spent the next few months staying at friends' houses, hunting almost every day. It was a simple, straightforwardly hedonistic world, dancing to the wind-up gramophone. White Ladies were drunk before dinner, hardly anyone opened a book.

To be known as a writer would have been social death, so she used the name M.J. Farrell, immortalising a Lismore pub. During this time her other main concern was an intense, five-year-long secret affair with the man who was, in 1938, to become her husband, Bobby Keane. He was dashing and, needless to say, rode beautifully, but he was also intelligent and sensitive and

encouraged her to take her writing more seriously.

A chance meeting at a Tipperary house-party with John Perry, one of the sons of the house but also a working actor in London, led to her first efforts to write plays. They are, in general style, clones of standard West End comedies of the time, but with much better drawn characters and an accurate, pointed wit in the dialogue. The most successful, *Spring Meeting*, produced in 1938, was one of the Shaftesbury Avenue hits of the year, and deserves revival.

But she ran into trouble with *Ducks and Drakes* in 1941, a play that satirised the English war effort at a time when the desperation of the military situation led few in the audiences to appreciate her comedy. Although she tried again with *Guardian Angel* in 1944 and *Treasure Hunt* in 1949, she never again had the success of the earlier work. But she loved the theatre, not least because the close relationship she enjoyed with Gielgud and Beaumont led her to attend rehearsals and emerge at least temporarily, and privately, from the anonymity that her social world had imposed on her.

The death in 1946 of her husband, at the early age of 37, was a blow. Their marriage had been a great source of strength to her. She stopped writing and devoted herself to bringing up their daughters. In any case, the world of the hunt and the accompanying coherence of the Anglo-Irish social life had begun to decline, even in strongholds like West Waterford. The crisis in the economy after 1945 had led to a marked decline in the various sources of income from the Empire on which so many of those families depended to augment the meagre returns from their farms. Some of the families from which

Molly Keane drew her ideas simply sold up and left.

The reasons for the renewal of her creativity that led to the Eighties books are not clear; perhaps she was just bored. She was too old to ride any more and, although she took an active part in community life at Ardmore, she may have felt the need to make a final record of a world as remote from contemporary Ireland as science fiction. With *Good Behaviour* in 1981, she burst on a largely unsuspecting world as a charming, wickedly witty old lady, very much Molly Keane, an independent Irishwoman and proud of it. She said then in an interview: "Ireland is the last bastion of civilisation... there is still great beauty, uninvaded." But she also knew the darker side of these years - a cousin was assassinated in the North by ex-SAS men who had set up as Protestant paramilitaries.

Keane was very unlucky not to win the Booker Prize with *Good Behaviour*; in many years she would have done so easily but it went to Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. She was unsurprised herself, thinking she was seen by the London literati as a right-wing old fossil, compared to the politically correct Rushdie. In fact, her last books do anything but celebrate the aristocratic milieu uncritically. The increasingly bleak element in the comedy encloses a vision of the world of the Anglo-Irish privileged as one of loneliness, futility and often despair. It may have appeared a terribly jolly life, but it was inwardly corrupt and doomed. Yet it had its own unique quality, and she chronicled its final phase better than anyone else has, better even than her great friend Elizabeth Bowen.

Although having virtually no formal education at all, of any kind, Molly Keane was extra-

ordinarily well-informed on a huge range of topics. She was a brilliant conversationalist. She read widely, but Jane Austen was the only mentor she acknowledged, and whose works she reread. Her little house on top of the cliff at Ardmore was her home for many years, with a fine collection of modern Irish paintings, those of Nora Guinness in particular. Keane's social behaviour was formal, with children in particular being treated kindly but expected to keep to their allotted place. Drinks were generous: she always said one of the few reasons to cut somebody was if they started putting optics on the spirals. An aggressive little dog followed her around the place. Like many Anglo-Irish, she appeared profoundly upper-class English on the surface, with a deeply attractive pointed face, blue eyes of exceptional clarity and the voice of a woman in her youth. But as soon as she started to speak the illusion broke. Although a warm friend, she was never slow to point out the faults of others.

To make her books so good, she needed the dose of acid in the bloodstream as well as more conventional substances, but it did lead to a sense of foreboding and mild anxiety in the Blackwater valley sitting-rooms after *Good Behaviour* came out. It was fairly clear to a lot of people who the cloddish Aaron in that book was modelled on. Who would be next? Unfortunately, no one will have that flattering minor worry any more.

James Pettifer

Mary Nesta Skrine ("M.J. Farrell"), playwright and novelist; born Co. Kildare 20 July 1904; married 1938 Robert Keane (died 1946; two daughters); died Ardmore, Co. Waterford 22 April 1996.



Keane: a charming, wickedly witty old lady, an independent Irishwoman and proud of it

## Christopher Milne

Christopher Milne was a remarkable man, who triumphantly survived a remarkable childhood, though not without considerable pain on the way.

He was born in 1920, the son of A.A. Milne, a rich and famous *Punch* writer and playwright, and his wife, Daphne. "May Billy be an everlasting joy to you," J.M. Barrie wrote, having been told the name the child was to use. As it turned out, he was not, but the fault was hardly his own. "We did rather want a Rosemary," Milne had written to another friend.

Christopher Robin, as he was actually named (he was never christened), had to wait a long time for his first haircut. But worse was to follow. In 1923, on a wet holiday in Wales, A.A. Milne started writing verse about his infant son. When *We Were Very Young* (1924) made Christopher Robin a household name.

The book was an instant best-seller. By 1928, it had been joined by the two Pooh books (*Winnie-the-Pooh*, 1926, and *The House at Pooh Corner*) and a further book of verse, *Now We Are Six* (1927) - all to repeat the first book's extraordinary success and all starring the boy and his teddy bear. Milne tried to reduce the damage by vowing in 1928 never to write another children's book, but it was too late. He also excused himself by saying that Christopher Robin was "Billy" at home and hardly the same person at all. "I do not want C.R. Milne ever to wish that his names were Charles Robert." But it was inevitable.

When A.A. Milne went to America in 1931 it was Christopher Robin everyone was interested in. *Punch* Magazine named him one of the most fa-

mous children in the world, along with Princess Elizabeth of York, Prince Michael of Romania, Yehudi Menuhin and Jackie Coogan, the film-star. In 1974, Penderennis in the *Observer* wrote that Christopher "had spent over 40 years trying to get off his knees from saying his prayers. Perhaps the most famous of all tiny boys (by comparison Little Lord Fauntleroy was a mere starlet), A.A. Milne's golden-curlied son grew up loathing the Pooh books."

This was not entirely the case. Indeed, at the time he told his father he thought Pooh "a good sort of book", and he wrote himself in 1973 that as a child "I quite liked being Christopher Robin and being famous. There were indeed times... when it was exciting and made me feel grand and important." "Alan's boy is quite unspoiled," his grandfather wrote in the year *Winnie-the-Pooh* was published. From all accounts he was a delightful child. It was only at Stowe and later, as he grew out of his part, that he came to resent the books so fiercely and to write: "It seemed to me almost that my father had got to where he was by climbing upon my infant shoulders, that he had fished from me my good name and had left me with the empty fame of being his son."

It was the Second World War - in which he was wounded in Italy as a platoon commander with the Sappers - that saved Christopher Milne from the burden of being Christopher Robin. Not long ago I met a man who had served with him in Trieste and had not known for a long time whose son he was. The war enabled Milne to become himself and eventually to

break away and live his own life, marrying his cousin Lesley de Selincourt and cutting himself off almost completely from his parents.

But he saw life as circular - our journey one that should take us back close to where we began, to the child's indivisible world in which all creatures are equal, the world we left when we went to school, as indeed Christopher Robin leaves the enchanted place on the top of the forest at the end of *The House at Pooh Corner*. As a child he had felt (inspired by the Doctor Dolittle books) that he might learn the language of animals. In later life he remained passionately involved in the natural world, in creatures however small. He described in *The Open Garden* (1988) how he had once reared the four heatherbell-like eggs a fox-moth had laid on his finger. He was immensely pleased when he was told he looked the sort of man who would be interested in a caterpillar. He knew the difference between huckle and betony. He liked night-walking and knowing the names of the stars.

Christopher Milne was in many ways, as he admitted, extremely like his father and the strength of the bond between them made the pain of breaking it all the greater. They were both essentially private people, individualists, observers, humanists. They both read Mathematics at Trinity College, Cambridge. Above all, they were both extremely good writers. Christopher never found another subject as interesting to his readers as his own life. His autobiographical writing, particularly in *The Path Through the Trees* (1979), has a most at-

tractive candour. He wrote the first volume, the best-selling *Enchanted Places* (1974), for himself (contradicting what he said on that subject in the book itself). It was soon after his father's death, long after his father's. Each session at the typewriter was "like a session on the analyst's couch". He wrote it hoping to pre-empt future biographers of his father, but it was the very act of writing it that eventually made it possible for him to agree to my *A.A. Milne: his life*. Having agreed, he made no conditions and did not see the book until it was published six years ago. His reaction relieved us both.

Writing *The Enchanted Places* enabled Christopher Milne to come to terms with what his father had done to him. Milne could never make similar mistakes with his own daughter, Clare, to whom he was as deeply devoted. His father had expected too much of him. Clare, a severely disabled spastic, "set us an example and taught us a philosophy that parents don't usually expect to learn from their children". He wrote "Lucky Clare to have such a mother" and we would say "Lucky Clare to have such a father". He had always been good with his hands and was able to design special cutlery and furniture for her. Once he brought home a little bank vole which amazingly entertained her for two years and eight months.

He sold his share in the future royalties he inherited from the Pooh books to the Royal Literary Fund (which already had a share) and, with the capital, set up a trust fund for her. Money never interested him and he gave much away, but he prided himself that he and his wife were

self-supporting for over 20 years at the Harbour Bookshop in Dartmouth. The boy schoolboy who stammered, and who had been so unwieldy that he thought you could send a telegram from a bank, became a successful bookseller and in the Sixties a passionate speaker on children and reading at meetings of PTAs and the School Library Association. Loving Dartmouth, he was for years Chairman of the Dartmouth and Kingswear Association.

In recent years he performed acts of filial piety, though pious was the last thing he ever was. He unveiled a statue of Winnie the bear cub at the London Zoo, and was involved in the restoration of Poohsticks Bridge and in the establishment of a memorial to his father and E.H. Shephard in Ashdown Forest. He took a leading part in the fight to save the forest from development and oil exploration - not so much because of Pooh but because of the forest itself. He said he took the playground of his Sussex childhood with him wherever he went - and it was his childhood as much as the good years of his devoted partnership with Lesley that enabled him to write in the preface to *The Path Through the Trees* that he had indeed had a happy life.

Anna Thwaite

Christopher Robin Milne, book-seller and writer; born London 21 August 1920; author of *The Enchanted Places* 1974, *The Path Through the Trees* 1979, *The Hollow on the Hill* 1982, *The Windfall* 1985, *The Open Garden* 1988; married 1948 Lesley de Selincourt (one daughter); died Totnes, Devon 20 April 1996.



'Empty fame': A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh and Christopher in 1926

Photograph: Howard Coster

## The Right Rev Kevin Rafferty

Kevin Rafferty was one of the last Roman Catholic priests to be raised for the Scottish priesthood in Ireland, at St Kieran's College, Kilkenny. This tradition has persisted since St Kieran's opened in 1782, the first seminary to be founded in Ireland after the end of the Penal Laws which restricted Roman Catholic religious practice.

Born in Garvagh, Co. Derry, in 1933, Rafferty received his secondary education at St Columba's College, Derry, before

studying for the priesthood. He was ordained priest in 1957 for the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh in St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny.

Rafferty was born into a family noted for its work for the Church. He had three cousins who were priests, two in Derry Diocese and one a Columban Father serving abroad, and a niece in religious life. He was a distant relative of Bishop Bernard O'Kane of Derry, the noted theologian and Classics

scholar, who is also remembered for his work in pioneering radio and his acquaintance with Marconi.

For 30 years after his ordination, Rafferty served successively in Lillithgow (1957-67), Dalkeith (1967-77) and North Berwick (1977-86). In 1989 he was appointed Vicar-General of the archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, and the following year Auxiliary Bishop.

With the appointment of myself, a native of Ballycastle, Co

Antrim, as Archbishop to St Andrews and Edinburgh in 1985, Cardinal Manning's recommendation to Rome in the mid-1860s that no Irish priest should ever be appointed to a Scottish diocese had at last been broken.

Manning had been appointed Apostolic Visitor to the Western District of Scotland by Propaganda Fide when a schism was threatened between the Highland Catholics and Irish immigrant Catholics. It was an added joy five years later when

Kevin Rafferty was ever cool, calm, collected; he had a great grasp of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and all it entails, was tolerant and believed that the Lord is looking after the Church, whatever human failings there may be.

Although Assistant Bishop, Rafferty remained an active priest in the parish of Saints John Cantius and Nicholas, Broxburn. His pastoral care

was recognised by his brother bishops in the Scottish Episcopal Conference. He held appointments as Scottish National President of the Commission for Pastoral and Social Care and as national Spiritual Director of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

One of his annual delights was taking part in both the Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes and the Easter pilgrimage with the Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust - at which he assisted as recently as

47; Mr Colin Welch, journalist, 72; Miss Teresa Wyllie, actress, 48; Sir Eric Yarrow, former chairman, Clydesdale Bank, 76.

Anniversaries

Births: William Shakespeare, playwright and poet, 1564; Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov, author, 1899. Deaths: William Shakespeare, playwright and poet, 1616; Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, author, 1616. Today is the Feast Day of St Adalbert (Vojtech) of Prague, Saints Felix, Fortunatus and Achileus. St George the Martyr, St Gerard of Toul and St Ivair.

Sir Timothy Garden, Commandant, Royal College of Defence Studies, 52; The Hon Victoria Gwendoline, author, 59; Mr William Haggerty, former Editor, *The People*, 57; Sir Arnold Hall, former chairman, Hawker Siddeley Group, 53; Sir Russell Hill, Permanent Under-Secretary, Scottish Office, 58; Mr James Kirkup, author, 73; Dr Richard Laws, Master, St Edmund's College, Cambridge, 70; Mr Tony Miles, chess player, 41; Mr Ronald Neame, film producer and director, 85; Professor George Stelner, former Professor of Comparative Literature, Oxford University, 67; Mr Walter Sweeney MP,

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Edinburgh, Trustee, National Maritime Museum, attends a reception at St James's Palace as President and Honorary Life Fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, chairs the 1996 Prince Philip Lecture, followed by dinner, at 8 John Adam Street, London WC2.

Prince of Wales begins the Province of Manitoba, Canada, visiting the Province of Manitoba, New Brunswick and Ontario. The Princess Royal, Patron, Sense - the National Deafblind and Rubella Association, visits Ysgol Ffynnon School Unit, Bryncoch, West Glamorgan, as President, British Knitting and Clothing Export Council, visits Alan Paine Knitwear Ltd, Armanford, Dyfed. Princess Margaret, President, attends a Pri-

vate View of the exhibition "Leonardo da Vinci: 100 Drawings from the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen", in aid of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, at the Queen's Gallery, London SW1. The Duchess of Gloucester visits the Whitley Homes Trust's Whitley Villages, Whitley-on-Thames, Surrey.

Prince Michael of Kent, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons, opens the new building at Rickmansworth Masonic School.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. F Company Scots Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, and provided by the Irish Guards.



Rafferty: cool, calm, collected

## BIRTHS

PINDER: On 23 March 1996 to Elizabeth Cairncross and Robert Pinder, a son (Calum).

WAKEMAN: On 15 April 1996, to Ruth (née Lloyd) and Sean, a daughter, Olivia Florence, a sister for Harriet Rose.

## DEATHS

WOOD: George, of Loughborough, Leicestershire aged 92 years, on 20 April 1996 after a short illness. Lecturer LEAD and handloom builder, late of Shepshed, Leicestershire. Crematorium service at Loughborough Crematorium on Friday 26 April at 12 noon. Family flowers only please.

## Births, Marriages &amp; Deaths

but donations if desired may be made to the Sue Ryder Hospice (cheques made payable to Sue Ryder Hospice) c/o Glens & Gutteridge Funeral Directors, 75 Ashby Road, Loughborough LE11 3BA, telephone 01509 238912.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please ring 0171-293 2011.

## Forthcoming marriages

Mr M. Henley and Miss S. E. Piggett. The engagement is announced between Mark, son of Mr and Mrs Charles Henley, of Hasings, and Susanna, daughter of Mr and Mrs Harry Piggett, of Holbrook, Derbyshire.

Mr A. D. Smith and Miss C. S. Graham

The engagement is announced between Andrew, second son of Mr and Mrs John Smith, of New Mills, Der-

byshire, and Trinka, middle daughter of Sir Alexander and Lady Graham, of Whitwell, Hertfordshire.

## Birthdays

Mrs Shirley Temple Black, former US ambassador, 68; The Most Rev Michael Bowen, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Southwark, 66; Mr Bill Cotton, chairman, Noel Gay Television, 68; Mr J. P. Donleavy, author, 70; Sir Desmond Downes, automotive engineer, 74; Mr David Evans MP, 61; Mr Harold French, actor and director, 99; Mr Leslie French, actor, singer and director, 92; Air Marshal

Sir Timothy Garden, Commandant, Royal College of Defence Studies, 52; The Hon Victoria Gwendoline, author, 59; Mr William Haggerty, former Editor, *The People*, 57; Sir Arnold Hall, former chairman, Hawker Siddeley Group, 53; Sir Russell Hill, Permanent Under-Secretary, Scottish Office, 58; Mr James Kirkup, author, 73; Dr Richard Laws, Master, St Edmund's College, Cambridge, 70; Mr Tony Miles, chess player, 41; Mr Ronald Neame, film producer and director, 85; Professor George Stelner, former Professor of Comparative Literature, Oxford University, 67; Mr Walter Sweeney MP,

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John 10:1-50



# How liberal is new Labour?

Blair and Jack Straw will beat the law and order drum all the way to the election. Is their new conservatism a ploy to make the party more electable or does it reflect a deep-dyed Victorian moralism? Polly Toynbee reports

Now you see it, now you don't. New Labour flashes a bright coin before our eyes, only to flick it away as soon as we reach out to grasp it. Key words, ideas, sentiments and symbols are lit up before us, full of significance, moral catchphrases pregnant with dispassionate meaning – single parents, teenage merchants, crime, bad neighbours, community and self-reliance. But as soon as we challenge them and ask what they mean, what policy, what practical applications? Then the words vanish again like a mirage.

They have served their purpose, just by being spoken. The party has planted an idea, staked out a territory and told the world that new Labour is moral, sensible, not chained to the politically correct and far removed from the bad old days of the GLC's myriad minority committees. But has Labour's traditional role as standard-bearer for liberal progressive values departed, too? Or is it merely hiding behind the conjuror's fingers?

Like playing on a xylophone of our sensibilities, Labour has brilliantly struck raw Tory voting nerves, beating out a new tune that is often distinctly right wing in timbre: Christian Democrat, churchy, decent, disciplinarian and orderly (Straw: "The first duty of any government should be the guarantee of a quiet life").

Gone is the praise for pluralism, freedom and diversity, that instinctive liberal siding with the under-dog. Sometimes the under-dog or "aggressive beggar" even gets an extra kicking from Labour. Do they mean all this, or is it just the cleverly seductive music of vote-getting?

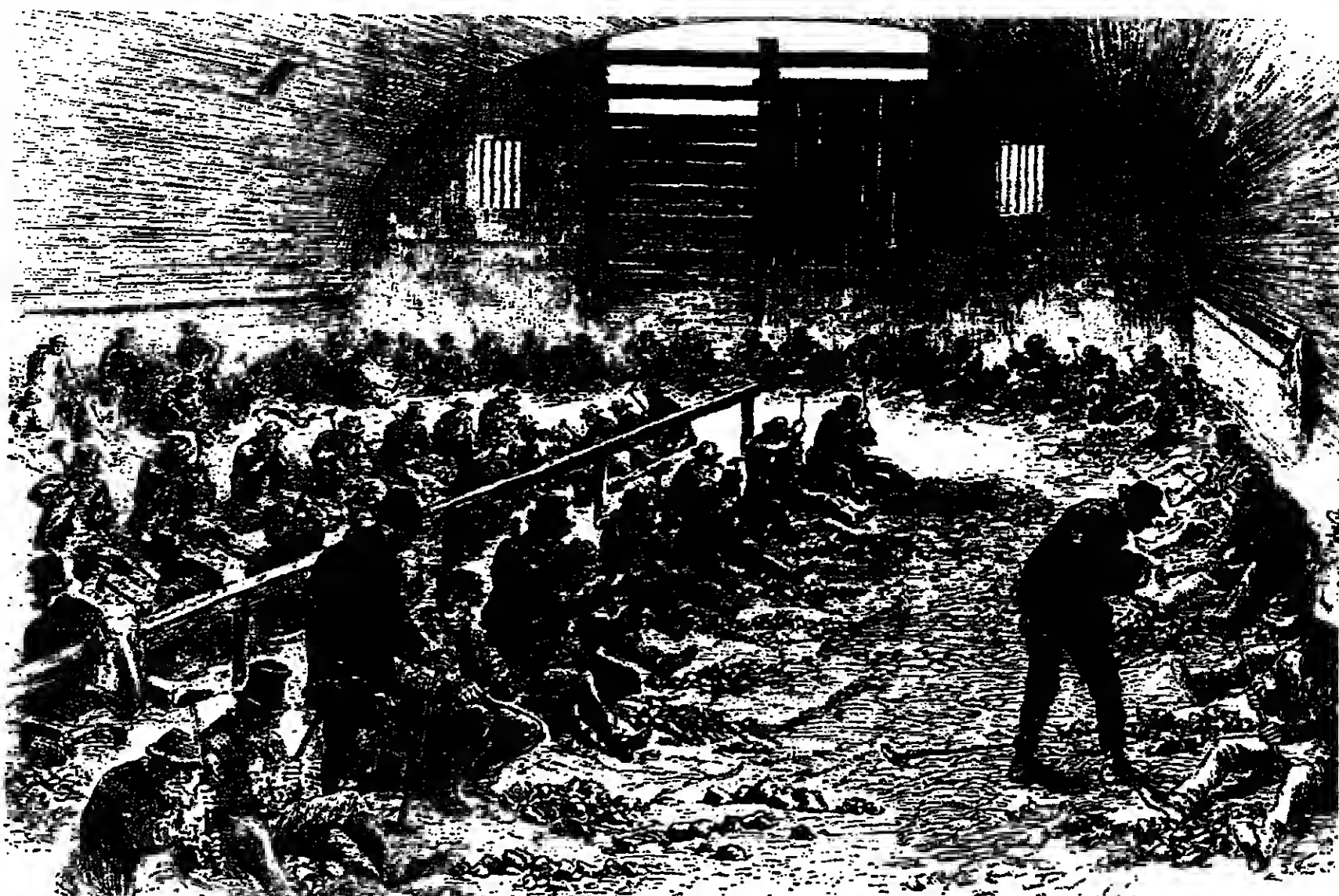
We do not know. No policy is set, no promises made and different players play different tunes to suit their audiences. We can only guess at what the final symphony will be.

It would be quite wrong to imagine, though, that Labour was ever a happily liberal party. Harold Wilson led a canny coalition of Hampstead and Hutton, the chattering classes coming to an accommodation with the cloth caps, encompassing both Roy Jenkins the radical reformer, and Jim Callaghan the policeman's friend. There was a tacit trade-off: the illiberal "hang 'em, fog 'em" cloth caps agreed to let the chattering abolish capital punishment and anti-homosexual laws in exchange for the closed shop and collective bargaining.

All that fell apart in chaos when Michael Foot could restrain neither a trade unionism that had become rampant and irresponsible nor a liberal left that had been overrun by the right-on lunacies of the likes of Ken Livingstone.

Now Tony Blair emerges as the gleaming phoenix, not rebuilding the old party but creating a new one. Yet in Hampstead they fear that liberal interests have been abandoned in a new marriage of convenience that excludes them altogether – the self-interest and crude populism of Essex wedded to the morality of the Christian Church. Neither of these is to their taste.

It has fallen to Paddy Ashdown to fire a warning shot in a thoughtful, but impassioned speech last month, staking out a clear Liberal Democrat claim to those old liberal values left behind by new Labour. While making clear his broad approval for most of what new Labour stands for – after all, he hopes to do business with them – he has found some clear pink water that



The 19th-century workhouse: Tony Blair believes in workfare because it is morally uplifting for the unemployed

gives voting Liberal a genuinely different flavour. He plants the thought that the best possible outcome of the next election would be New Labour in coalition with Lib Dems, vote-catching Christianity tempered by decent caring old unelectable liberalism.

Ashdown points with alarm to Labour's infatuation with American communitarianism and the work of Amitai Etzioni, the high priest of new left moralism. He fears this tyranny of the majority crushes any dissenting voice, ruling by collective shame through the law of the lace curtain. Lib Dems distrust Labour's commitment to constitutional reform: for them, it is the only true guarantee that locks genuine pluralism into politics for ever.

Ashdown looks with anxiety at Labour's eagerness to make a scapegoat of the underclass. He despises the way Labour avoids unpopular issues of conscience. While he spoke up boldly for the rights of

Hong Kong citizens to come to Britain, Labour did not. Tony Blair took a trip around the Far East that missed out tricky Hong Kong altogether and he came back instead full of alarming praise for orderly Singaporean values, where chewing gum,

side of the losers as well as the wealth-creators? Hattersley sets his benchmark for the party's liberal values: "The two great liberal tests are the party's attitudes to ethnic minorities and immigration law, and sexual behaviour, on race and capital punishment."

Hardly had I opened my mouth to ask to see the party's liberal credentials than he hastened to ladle out praise for Roy Jenkins as the greatest reforming Home Secretary of all time – on private sexual behaviour, on race and capital punishment.

## How much will you be taxed?

In the run-up to the 1992 election Hamish McRae launched a devastating critique of Labour's tax plans. In tomorrow's *Independent* he runs his slide rule over Gordon Brown's plans to calculate the top rate of tax you are likely to pay under a Tony Blair government. So if you want to know how much Labour will take from your pay packet, don't miss his analysis.



Illustration: Hulton Getty

Now what does this admiration of Jenkins signify? It is easy now to praise with these long-dead reforms, but where are his own brave and unpopular policies, pursued fearlessly for their justice alone? What might equivalent bravery be now? Perhaps a will-

ingness to open a debate, at least, on legalising cannabis? Perhaps a meaningful discourse on the future of the monarchy? On these things much of the country ruminate – but not Parliament, and certainly not new Labour.

"I am well aware of how I am perceived," Jack Straw says, with a rueful smile. A list follows: he voted to lower the

homosexual age of consent to 16; he was brought up very well by a single mum, and sees no problem with one-parent families *per se* ("although I know that's not Tony's view").

He would repeal "most of" the Asylum Bill and make immigration law fairer. Would everyone born here be given back the right to citizenship? "We haven't finally decided." On penal reform, as the prison population has rocketed under Howard, can he say whether it will come down again under his policies? No, he can't say for sure.

His critics say he follows Michael Howard like a true shadow, no glimmer of daylight between them. He replies that if Michael Howard devotes himself single-mindedly to digging large elephant traps for Labour – the Asylum Bill is a prime example – he is not going to be stupid enough to oblige them by jumping in.

Times have changed since Jenkins' day. Looking back at both Labour and Tory old manifestos, crime barely featured although it tops voters' concerns. Many colleagues who are deeply liberal by instinct have had the sobering experience of confronting desperate Labour voters on estates plagued by marauding gangs of youths, unchecked by police or courts. What is "liberal" about letting communities of decent poor people suffer at their hands?

In the end, though, we are left looking into his eyes, listening to the spaces between his words and guessing what kind of Home Secretary he will be. In the end, despite the necessary law-and-order sabre-rattling, it is probable that he will make a respectably liberal fist of it. After Howard, he will blow like a cool wind of reason through the fetid air of the Home Office corridors. He may not mean what some of his words seek to suggest, but he is a Wilsonian figure, delicately balancing reasonable freedom with reasonable concern about crime.

Now does Tony Blair really mean what he says? Little of what he has said can be pinned on him. In one useful sound bite he is "the party of the family", but with the next breath he explains this means practical help for working mothers – so the magic coin "family values" is cleverly displayed in a public place.

The Hattersley tendency says Blair means what he says.

One says: "He is all of a piece and not pretending. He does quite like the idea of bad young men being marched about in camps. He has a passion about single parents and a genuine anxiety for the welfare of their disadvantaged children. Workfare appeals to him because it is for the real moral good of the unemployed. He would play the Good Samaritan, but would feel obliged to ask penetrating questions about whether the victim had contributed in some way to his plight."

There is little cynicism in Tony Blair; it comes from the heart and that is what scares old liberals. They would rather believe this was all a clever electoral trick: once in power he will cast off his cloak and with one bound we shall all be free. But that Victorian moralism is deep-dyed. It demands a balance between rights and responsibilities, between individualism and community, between family and sexual liberty, discipline and freedom. In this he talks not only to the electors, but to God.

## DIARY

### For Tories, it's a matter of opinion

Brian Mahoney (below), the Conservative Party chairman, has hired ICM to carry out opinion polls in the run-up to the election. You know, opinion polls, those things Tories don't believe in because they got it wrong last time. And doesn't ICM do polls for the *Guardian*? Doesn't it also use rival poll-

ster NOP's field force for face-to-face interviews? And doesn't NOP work for the Labour Party? "I think they'll use a different subcontractor for their Tory party work," says a well-placed source. I hear that some of the Tory campaign team preferred the presentation from Harris, the only other firm to pitch for the work. The team included Sir Tim Bell, Margaret Thatcher's favourite PR man, Peter Gummer, another PR man and brother of the Environment Secretary, Charles Lewington, the new head of communications at Conservative Central Office, and Tim Collins, his predecessor, now a Tory candidate but retained as a consultant by Dr Mahoney.

Harris offered a new technique called trade-off analysis. This works by offering interviewees choices between "non-ideal scenarios", such as higher taxes or worse schools. This was of course totally unrealistic because under the Tories you can have both. So Dr Mahoney took the closely-guarded secret decision to hire ICM.

But why them? Could it be that ICM happens to use a technique for adjusting its polling figures which has produced the most pro-Tory results of any of the main polling companies.

### Words to the slaughter

The newpeak of Orwell's 1984 lives. At the Select Committee on Agricul-

ture and Health, three gentlemen from the "meat processing industry" were putting up a spirited defence, likening their work to that of the "medical profession". But it was their term for abattoir workers – the chaps who chop up the carcasses – which showed their real mastery of newpeak. They are not slaughterhouse workers, *mais non*. They are "meat engineers". George Orwell, eat your heart out. So to speak.



### No longer the willing laird

Fancy a fully featured Georgian neo-classical mansion in the heart of the city with lovely gardens and a swimming pool? The Olympic gold medal runner Steve Ovett has put his Scottish stately home on the market and is asking £1.2m for it. Stately House in Ayr was built in 1812 for the Marquess of Ovev (best known for inventing the rules for boxing) and designed by Sir Robert Smirke, architect of the British Museum. It came into Ovett's hands in the mid Eighties when he bought it for £750,000 from an absentee Australian. Olympic running is, of course, an amateur sport. But Ovett won lucrative contracts for TV work in America following his successes. Eight years and an estimated further £900,000 later he has restored it to American standards – indoor pool, gym, sauna and games room – and an orangery, billiard room, library, Italian garden and summerhouse thrown in. The cost of running the house is paid for by a lucrative holiday cottage business in the courtyard that brings in £100,000 a year. Why Ovett decided to go and live in a 10-bedroom house in Scotland is not clear but according to his estate agent, Jamie Macrae, it is no longer practical. "He is very busy travelling, doing commentary and work with the international athletic boards." The future owner can also boast another famous link, although not of the sporting kind. Oscar Wilde was a frequent visitor and it was his association with the Marquess of Queensberry's son, Lord Alfred Douglas, that led to his imprisonment.

### Current affairs and a talking princess

I am a little bemused at Martin Bashir's *Panorama* interview with the Princess of Wales winning the Bafta prize for Best Talk Show. Talk show? Probing, incisive interview with great relevance to the constitution and future of the monarchy, surely. There I was labouring under the delusion that *Panorama* might want to



be considered in the best documentary category, or best factual series. But now we know. *Panorama* is in fact a talk show, with the biggest budget the BBC has ever given to a talk show. *Panorama*'s editor, Steve Hewlett, tells me: "It wasn't a talk show in the conventional sense, but it's a big prize and we're delighted." If it really was so keen to throw off its current affairs pedigree, then surely it should have entered the Princess of Wales interview under a more appropriate category – best drama? Not quite. Best light entertainment? Almost. Best actress? Aaaaah.

### Emma's 'ere

Who could fail to be impressed with the way Emma Thompson's accent at the Bafta awards had journeyed further down the road towards Bow Has Emma (below), the proud winner of the British film industry's 'best actress' award, given in to mol pronunciation? Far from it, according to our friend the Professor of Demotic Linguistics at the University of Neasden.

"The trained ear," he told us, "can tell at once that Miss Thompson's consonantal lacuna in the middle of the word 'British' is a long way from being the glottal stop of a dropped 't'. Nor is it the preglottal Teutonic *Verschluckt*, so beloved of Mr Freddie Treeman in the opening aspiration of such words as 'Ampshire'. For her, the 't' in 'British' is not so much dropped as casually cast aside in what we term 'Rada Cockney' and replaced by a gently articulated allophone of a quality that I have detected in only one other speaker."

He paused to give added effect to his final revelation. "I think you'll find, if you listen carefully," he said, "that the sound of Emma's neo-Cockney 't' is precisely the same glottal occlusion that comes between 'an' and the Bottomley 'otel'."

Eagle Eye

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# Thank the banks for our tunnel

## All in favour of black sweaters, say 'aye'



## • LETTERS TO THE EDITOR •

then he would never say in 17 syllables what he could say in 170.

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1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.



## Why one man's beef is good for us all

James Goldsmith's call for a referendum on Europe highlights the gap between people and politicians

Why is Sir James Goldsmith like a mad cow? The answer is that both are pushing the argument about European integration out of the Tory party and into the consciousness of the nation as a whole. The anti-Conservative referendum campaign and popular anger over the beef ban are breaking open Eurosceptic politics. From now on, they represent something that will have to be resolved by the people, rather than simply by the government whips' office.

This is good news, though it may not feel that way for many decent, pro-European politicians. The beef industry, like the plight of the British fishing fleet, is one of those issues that generally have negative class appeal. Among the metropolitan political elite it is a low-interest subject: it can leap briefly to the top of the political agenda when a public health disaster seems possible, but then it sinks away. It has none of the perennial interest of, say, John Major's relations with Kenneth Clarke.

Away from Westminster, however, it looms very large indeed. It interests people and affects them in a basic way. It is just the sort of issue that, coming at a critical moment, can change national perceptions about politics.

Dissident politicians can bang on for ever about Maastricht, or the sovereignty of Parliament or the Single European Act, and fail to stir the vast uninterest of middle Britain. But beef bans and the possibility of retaliation against French apples, or wine, or whatever, rouses instant attention. It twists the lion's tail. It raises old, half-dead devils.

In some ways this is regrettable. It smacks of populism and illogic. Should we really be blaming European commissioners, rather than our own standards on the use of animal feed and pesticides, for what happened to beef farms? The Common Fisheries Policy has damaged the interests of trawler crews and coastal towns around Britain; but the shortage of Atlantic and North Sea fish has more to do with a technology that has grown too good for its own good.

Yet our national fright when the BSE story first broke has been quickly replaced by national outrage at the European ban that followed it. A public health story has jumped the journalistic species-barrier to become a story about European integration. It is as if our emotional reaction to the fear of brain-rotting meat has been transferred. Though this was a nightmare hatched at home, already the blame has been shifted, and the direction of the shift is significant.

Nor is the shift occurring only on the right of politics. Hear the Oxford councillor John Power, a Labour man, on the need for the town to suspend its twinning links with Bonn, Leiden and Grenoble, as reported by Oxford's student paper: "The destruction of our beef industry is being carried out with malice by our so-called European partners. So what is the point of our country pledging peace, friendship and co-operation with these cities?" I cite this not to single Mr Power out for mockery - though he deserves to be mocked - but because he says what many think. If post-war European politics has been about trying to outgrow



ANDREW MARR

### A politics that forgets jobs and democracy is dangerous stuff

mankind's old habit of blaming the strange-vowelled folk next door for local failures, then all this stuff about beef and fish is mere regression. For nearly half a century, smooth politicians and diplomats have been trying to calm this savage spirit.

But the island tribes have their truth, too. In this case, if the proposal is that authority should be passed to a supranational level, in order to achieve greater prosperity, but without a difficult democratic argument first, then Britain may be the first country to say no. But we will not be the last.

Enter Sir James Goldsmith, stage right, ice-blue eyes alight, demanding a referendum on "who governs Britain?" He don't want to fight, but, by jingo, if he do, he has the men, he has the £20m and he has the manifesto, too.

Except, of course, that he does want to fight. Having had the opportunity to talk and argue with him about free

trade, I have no illusions about his capacity. Mocked, feared and reviled by some, he is a man of huge energy and serious intelligence. Like many business tycoons, it is not a reflective intelligence, but a focused, passionate one. His mind is less a library than an armoury - a gleaming fact-bunker, bang up to date and stocked for offensive operations.

He seems determined to help split the Tory party and grab his place in history as someone who forced the European issue into the forefront of a general election. As a protectionist and an environmentalist, he makes odd company for almost all the Tory right. Government ministers splutter incoherently about the outrage of Sir James as a rich man trying to buy his way into a political argument. So, they are against opinionated billionaires all of a sudden? What about the guys who fund their party and their careers?

Sir James, meanwhile, is lucky in his timing: the Government is flailing desperately and under terrible internal pressure from its dissident nationalists. Their would-be leader, John Redwood, is to talk about a referendum with Goldsmith. The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, is already being vindicated in his misgivings about the ratification of conceding a limited referendum (on the single currency) and then being put under pressure to go further.

But the current "pro-European" and "anti-European" positions on the referendum question are almost entirely the wrong way round. If the question is asked Goldsmith's way, as a straightforward pro-EU or anti-EU choice, then Britain remains likelier

to go for integration than full independence. But then, Sir James was always brilliant-draft.

What of Britain's pro-EU politicians who mostly want to negotiate a new political order for Europe that involves sharing power and decisions while retaining ultimate sovereignty (the right to say no) with the old nations? They have nothing to lose by a referendum - or, indeed, by further referendums in the future. It has been the covert and elitist nature of the EU project that has always been its most offensive aspect. Without an emphatic popular mandate, regularly renewed, these schemes are doomed.

The pro-referendum movement may be misguided in its nationalist optimism, but it deserves support in principle from all good democrats. And in the end, it is no good complaining about populist anger over the beef ban, or the partial destruction of the British fishing industry. Political integration will never eradicate strong local feelings or competition for markets and resources. To treat these as the Old Adam, an ancient European failing which can be healed by directives from commissioners, is a fatal failure of imagination.

Better by far to recognise the beef row as a useful warning of things to come - under any system - and read its message now. If politicians have been shocked by the combination of the referendum campaign and the beef crisis, the shock has been salutary. A politics that forgets the basics - jobs and democracy - is dangerous stuff. Sir James, the reviled outsider, is wrong about many things. But he is right about that.

## Taking the fizz out of Oddbins

Anthony Rose laments the possible loss of an innovator in quality high-street wine

Oddbins up for sale. Again. Not for the first time, rumours that parent company Seagram have decided to divest themselves of their innovative and popular high street chain have drawn the now predictable tight-lipped response - "it's only speculation" - from Wimbledon head office. This time the rumours are better than ever, with names such as Greenalls, Cellars and Tesco among the most favoured front-runners.

With only 211 shops nationwide, Oddbins is a mere sprat compared to the mighty Thresher and Victoria Wine chains with over 1,500 stores apiece. Yet it has become a byword for an unequalled range of quality wines and the enthusiastic service offered by its laid-back staff. An Oddbins-less high street might represent a short-term victory for the bean counters, but a cheerless wake for the modern era of fun and innovation in wine.

Oddbins was founded in 1963 by the eccentric entrepreneur Ahmed Pochee, a now legendary wine trade figure still occasionally sighted wheel-dealing his way through the cash and carries of Britain. In the days of brewery brands and basic claret, Pochee and his kindred spirit, Brian Barnett of Augustus Barnett, took maximum advantage of the end of Resale Price Maintenance.

Slashing profit margins to the bone, they bounced out the traditional stockholding, high-margin middleman, shipping 100-odd cases of wine from here, there and everywhere straight to store. Ill-assorted jumbles of wines spilling out of barrels onto wooden floors typified a welcome new, customer-friendly approach to wine retailing.

When the old Peter Dominics and Augustus Barnetts were swallowed up by corporate predators, the purchase of Oddbins' 54 stores by the spirits giant Seagram for £3.6m in 1984 seemed to usher in the end of an exciting era of expansion and innovation. In fact it was just the beginning. By having the foresight to give its globe-trotting buyers *carte blanche*, Seagram maintained Oddbins' spirit of independence-cum-fun.

When Australia was poised to make its entrance onto the UK stage, Oddbins took full advantage. So much so that by last year, Australia accounted for 40 per cent of Oddbins' sales - hence the pun "Ozbins" put out by jealous rivals. Oddbins can take credit for leading

where others have followed, not just in the Australia-inspired wine revolution, but in Chilean and in Californian wines, the latter a particularly tough nut to crack given its relatively high prices.

Against the general down-market trend, Oddbins has consistently held out against cutting quality corners. The chain's buyers, led by the indefatigable John Ratcliffe and Steve Daniel, gleefully trod heavily on the toes of the independent wine trade when, three years ago, they took the highly successful gamble of offering customers a range of upper crust 1992 white burgundies. The cachet extends to malt whiskies

With its anarchic Ralph Steadman image, Oddbins has set the tone

and a thicket of traditional British and premium imported beers and lagers.

The big brewery-owned chains have followed suit with their own Oddbins-style chains. Thresher's Wine Rack and flagship Bottoms Up stores, Victoria Wine's new upmarket Cellars and Greenalls' Wine Cellar are all responses to the Oddbins culture of innovation. And Oddbins' six Fine Wine Stores, selling parcels of fine, exclusive wines, too small to go into the 211 high street stores, have become well established.

Despite the image of youthful anarchy, Oddbins claims that its customers number "anyone and everyone". The London and the South orientation suggests the relatively well-heeled. Value for money is in fact a major criterion, but unlike the typical supermarket Frascati-purchaser in search of the inoffensive, Oddbins' customers are customers with attitude. If they've bought a bottle and liked it, they are just as likely to go back and look for new and exciting flavours as to stick with it.

Compellors might be expected to be laughing into their designer beers at Oddbins' current discomfort, but the more realistic among them recognise that the loss of Oddbins would make the world of wine a poorer place. With its unstuffy ambience and anarchic Ralph Steadman image, Oddbins has set the tone and standard of the modern off-licence. Its loss would be nobody's gain.

## An olive branch to democracy

The triumph of the Olive Tree coalition could herald a more stable era in Italian politics, says Andrew Gumbel

The victory may not have been overwhelming and the road ahead may still be rocky, but the Italian centre-left's winning vote suggests the beginning of a new era. The triumph of the left after 50 years of exclusion from national government proves that the country is finally coming to terms with the normal rules of Western democracy, whereby power alternates from one main bloc to another.

Romano Prodi and his Olive Tree coalition will not have a free run, since they won an absolute majority only in the Senate, the upper house of parliament. In the Chamber of Deputies, they will have to rely on the co-operation of either the far-left



Supporters of the centre-left Olive Tree celebrate at a rally in Rome

Photograph: Paolo Cocco/Reuters

Italy stands a real chance of dispensing with its cycle of corrupt coalitions

Rifondazione Comunista, with whom they had an electoral pact but almost no policy points in common, or the Northern League, the volatile separatist movement which cashed in on a massive protest vote in Lombardy and the region around Venice. But if they can negotiate a viable *modus vivendi*, Italy stands a real chance of dispensing with its unvarying cycle of unstable governments and corrupt cross-party coalitions.

The new government's first and most important task will be to prepare Italy for Europe, streamlining the state apparatus to bring the country's runaway public debt under control and to restructure the overcomplicated, much abused tax system. But Mr Prodi has also promised to open negotiations with the opposition on institutional reform, including a new electoral law to replace Italy's messy hybrid of proportional representation and first-past-the-post.

What form the new system will take is not clear - there is talk of copying the American system, the French system, the German system, even the

British system - but Mr Prodi and his allies understand they have an historic opportunity. Theirs will be the 55th government since the Second World War, maintaining the average of almost one every 10 months: a new electoral law might require a 56th to take office before the end of the millennium, but thereafter it is in everyone's interests - the opposition's included - to close the revolving door for good.

Italy's chronic instability has been due to two factors: the need to prevent any return to dictatorship after the defeat of Fascism, and Italy's key role in the Cold War. The first led to a constitution so overlaid with checks and balances that no government

could ever last, while the second blocked the Italian Communist party, the largest left-wing force in the country, from participating in national government.

For decades there was a kind of organised chaos, with the Christian Democrats remaining in the driving seat, but with efficient government for ever impeded by shifting alliances and factional hickering within the ruling party. Instead of alternating power blocs, Italy was lumbered with "transformismo" - an elegant word to describe the inelegant opportunism, back-scratching and favour-seeking that motivated parties and factions to switch allegiances at the drop of a bat for short-term political advantage.

In many ways, this was a prolonged version of what France went through under the Fourth Republic. But France managed to rewrite its constitution amidst the chaos of the Algerian war, and achieved the normality of alternating government when François Mitterrand brought the left to power in 1981.

Italy, by contrast, muddled on through the end of the Cold War, the break-up of its Communist party into the mainstream PDS and the irreducible Rifondazione Comunista and - eventually - the collapse of the governing parties under the weight of their own corrupt contradictions in the early 1990s.

The years since have been fraught

with false starts and renewed instability. The new electoral system, approved by referendum in 1993, only increased the number of parties in parliament, and it failed to provide a durable working majority when the media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi swept into power at the head of a new conservative coalition in March 1994. Mr Berlusconi's victory was hailed as a new beginning, a Thatcherite revolution in the making and the birth of a new political animal, the entrepreneur as leader. But Mr Berlusconi was steeped in the old system, owing much of his success to his friendship with the now disgraced Socialist Party leader Bettino Craxi; and in his brief period

One can envisage a new moderate left and a new moderate right evolving

in office he vigorously pursued his own interests rather than the country's.

The Berlusconi phenomenon now looks like an aberration, not a new start. The man himself is on trial for tax fraud and faces further judicial investigation into his business practices. It seems safe to predict that the next few years will see a realignment on the right, with moderate voters of Mr Berlusconi's Forza Italia party coalescing around a new leader and the reformed neo-fascist National Alliance pushed back to the fringes.

Mr Prodi's Olive Tree coalition is essentially an anti-Berlusconi alliance rather than a true force of the left - it includes, for example, the free-marketting Lamberto Dini, the outgoing prime minister. But if institutional and electoral reforms go through as planned, one can envisage a new left and a new moderate right evolving out of the present blocs, in time for the next election, and a durable two-party system taking shape. The modernisation of Italy and the stability of its parliamentary democracy will depend on it.

## How local heroes can cost the Treasury dear

The Government is missing a few billion. It's overlooking an obvious suspect, says David Nicholson-Lord

If Kenneth Clarke and his team from the Treasury want an explanation for Britain's vanishing tax revenues, they could do worse than examine chaos theory. This holds that the flexing of a butterfly's wings in China can, eventually, create a storm in New York. The smallest of actions, in other words, can influence the largest of events - general elections for instance.

The disclosure last week that the Government has over-run its borrowing target by about £3bn, seriously limiting its scope for pre-election tax cuts, prompted another search for suspects - tax-fiddling corporations, the growth of low-income self-employment, the black economy. Yet, of the fastest-growing and most fascinating bit of the new tax-resistant economy, virtually nothing has been heard - a strange omission indeed, since it promises in the long run to be of far greater importance, not least to government and its management of national finances.

On Saturday, the Sustainable Agriculture Food and Environment Alliance (Safe) is holding a conference in London to discuss a large and diffuse range of grassroots initiatives that have largely escaped the attention of policymakers and pundits. These range from credit unions to food co-operatives and involve significant numbers of people - hundreds of thousands. They take as their starting point the perception that the big, tax-yielding economy run by the state and its allies in business has lost its way.

The Safe conference will look, for example, at how communities can bolster the "local food economy" - usually by cutting out the middleman (ie supermarket) and restoring direct links between food producers and consumers. This includes farmers' markets (popular in the US and now starting in Britain), new consumer co-operatives (Out of This World, a green supermarket chain, opened its first store last November and plans 12

by the end of 1997) and the humble veggie-box - organic produce brought to your doorstep by a local grower.

But the Nineties have also seen a mushrooming of other self-help initiatives. The number of credit unions - highly localised, co-operative lending institutions - has tripled: they now have around 140,000 members. There are an estimated 400 local exchange trading systems (LETS), in which people barter skills and products through cashless currencies. Community businesses and co-operatives have boomed: there are over 1,100, compared with a handful 20 years ago.

Much of this activity has its roots in wider changes in employment and the economy. But to see it as merely part of the growth of self-employment or the black economy is to miss its significance - not least the radical challenge it poses, in the name of a new, informal local economic order, to the global economy. In environmental terms and energy

use the global economy is highly inefficient. Why bring Granny Smith apples 14,000 miles from New Zealand when we can grow them ourselves? Within the UK, we are eating roughly the same amount of food as 15 years ago - yet it travels 50 per cent further to arrive at its destination. The increase in "food miles" adds to pollution and packaging, means more chemical preservatives are used and puts small producers out of business.

While growing and buying locally makes far more sense, it will not be welcome to the Exchequer, since the cost of creating and cleaning up pollution generated by food miles counts as gross national product or economic "growth", and thus yields tax revenues. Nor do Lets commend themselves to the Treasury, since no money changes hands and there is no income to tax. The quality of life of those taking part may have improved - many Lets participants speak in glowing terms of the neighbourliness

and self-esteem they have rediscovered - but quality of life is not taxable.

If one aim of such grassroots initiatives is to generate "social" wealth, another is local economic autonomy. Research is showing just how much money leaks out of local economies into the coffers of big, distant business. An estimated 80 per cent of supermarket takings are lost to the community: suppose this was recycled into local jobs?

Such thinking may herald the emergence of a remodelled pre-industrial economy in which economic power drains away from the nation-state into a network of towns, cities and regions. Such a prospect is still a long way off - but when butterflies flex their wings, the world (chancellors included) had better watch out.

For details of Saturday's conference, "Action on Food Miles - strategies for a local food economy", contact Safe Alliance on 0171 825 5660.



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# Baby Bells plan £15bn merger after US deregulation

DAVID USBORNE  
New York

Two telephone Baby Bells, Bell Atlantic and Nynex, yesterday announced plans to combine forces in the biggest telecommunications merger ever seen in America. The deal, which still faces the scrutiny of shareholders and of federal and state-level regulators, would be worth almost \$23bn (£15bn).

making it the second-biggest merger of any kind in US corporate history, after the 1989 takeover of RJR Nabisco by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts for \$26.4bn.

The new company, to be called Bell Atlantic and based in New York, would be the second-largest telecommunications company in the US behind AT&T and the fourth-highest world-wide. It would have a

global workforce of 133,000 employees and boast combined revenues, based on 1995 figures, of \$27.8bn.

The way for the merger was opened by the passage through the US Congress two months ago of a sweeping telecommunications deregulation bill that lifts many of the barriers to competition between long-distance and local telephone providers and cable companies.

By combining, the companies hope to contend with new competition in their local markets and to break into the lucrative long-distance sector, both in the US and internationally. Together, they cover an area densely populated by business and private customers, from Maine to Virginia and taking in cities such as New York, Washington DC and Philadelphia. "This is the most natural

partnership in the world," Roland Smith, the chairman of Bell Atlantic, declared at a news conference. "This a merger of equals in every sense of the word."

Under the deal, Mr Smith, 58, will run the new Bell Atlantic for the first year, after which control will begin to transfer to Ivan Seidenberg, 49, the chairman of Nynex.

The Baby Bells were created in 1984 when the US government forced the break-up of the old AT&T - or Ma Bell. Until this month, there were seven Bells across the US. With this deal and the \$16.7bn fusion announced two months ago between Telecel Pacific of California and SBC Communications, the number is set to decline to five.

Analysts had widely anticipated yesterday's announce-

ment and by-and-large declared it desirable and even inevitable. The Bell Atlantic deal "is the one that everyone thought made sense," said Scott Cleland of the Washington Research Group. Navigating the regulatory hurdles may not be simple, however. Federal and state regulators will consider the claims of consumer groups that combined, the two Bells will have too much power to set rates in

the North-east region. "If there were any two Bell companies that were in a position to go in and compete with one another, because they have known brands across regions, it would be Bell Atlantic and Nynex," Bradley Stillman of the American Federation of America contended.

"Instead, we have two entrenched monopolies joining forces to create one monopoly."

## Eurotunnel 'may never repay debts'

PETER RODGERS  
Business Editor

Sir Alastair Morton, co-chairman of Eurotunnel, has told banks they must slash the interest rates and fees they charge on the tunnel's £9bn of loans.

Announcing losses last year of £925m, Sir Alastair said yesterday that Eurotunnel had warned the banks that the company may never be able to repay its debts during the entire 57 years left for its concession.

The company said it had told the banks and the two mediators appointed by the French courts that negotiations "should not be based on any assumptions that cash flows over the life of the concession will necessarily be sufficient to repay the banks their principal plus interest, at the levels currently in the credit agreements, plus interest and penalties payable thereon."

Sir Alastair made clear that the comment was aimed principally at persuading the banks to cut their profit margins.

Eurotunnel currently pays its banks a margin of more than 1.6 percentage points above the standard London interbank interest rates on its debts.

Sir Alastair said this margin was appropriate for a project in its construction phase but not for one that is complete and has 57 revenue-earning years ahead. He called this one of the main sticking points with the banks. "Nobody should plan to get project financing rates for the next 57 years," he added.

Eurotunnel, which yesterday replaced SBC Warburg with Kleinwort Benson as its UK broker, also pays substantial fees to its 225 banks. These included £45m in the fourth quarter of last year as a result of the suspension of payment of interest on £8.1bn of the £9bn debts.

Sir Alastair insisted that there would still be equity left for shareholders once the debt restructuring with the banks was completed.

A shutdown or receivership did neither the banks nor Euro-

tunnel any good. Refusing to discuss the negotiations with the banks in any detail before the annual meeting in June, he said: "One thing we won't do is swap debt into equity and go away."

However, he conceded that a debt-for-equity swap could form a part of a more complex package.

Sir Alastair repeated his claims that the Anglo-French nature of the company - two-thirds of whose shares are owned in France - gave special protection under French law to shareholders. He said: "Shareholders have to vote on any solution other than a shutdown and the process of moving towards that vote is overseen on an informal basis by the *mandataires ad hoc*."

These are two court appointees, Lord Wakeham, chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, and Robert Badinter, former French Minister of Justice.

To rub some salt in the point against the banks that this is not

an ordinary corporate rescue, Sir Alastair said: "An Anglo-Saxon shutdown and sell-off just does not do them any good in this case."

He believed that when an outline deal was reached with the 26 lead banks - which is unlikely before the autumn - "there is going to be something for the banks and something for the shareholders or there is not going to be a deal - and everybody wants a deal."

Although the shares slipped 4p to 69p yesterday, Sir Alastair insisted that the £925m loss was no surprise, and was foreseeable from the numbers the company had given at the interim results in the autumn.

Last year, after bank fees of £60m and depreciation of £136m Eurotunnel lost £200m before interest. The £925m overall loss was reached after interest charges of £768m, of which £118m is a charge for bank interest unpaid since the standstill on 14 September.

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Sir Alastair Morton yesterday: Warned banks that cash flows may not cover repayments Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

## National Power rebuffs Atlanta with raised bid

MICHAEL HARRISON

National Power yesterday raised the stakes in its battle to fend off a hostile bid from Southern Company of the US by raising its offer for the regional UK power company Southern Electric by about 10 per cent to £2.5bn.

The increased offer came as a Government announcement on whether to allow through this merger and PowerGen's bid for Midlands Electricity was believed to be imminent.

Ian Lang, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, is expected to announce his decision this week, possibly in the next 48 hours, signalling what could be a rash of vertical integration across the electricity industry.

Southern Company refused to add to its statement last week that it was considering a "combination" with National Power but would await the Government's ruling on the two generators' bids before announcing terms.

However, a spokesman in Atlanta, Georgia, said that the statement "still stands". Other sources have suggested that Southern Company may pull out and look elsewhere for a sale of three power stations to Hanson first week and yesterday's raised offer for Southern.

National Power's increased offer for Southern Electric is conditional on the merger being approved on terms and conditions which are satisfactory. It is offering £9.60 cash a share and is allowing Southern Electric shareholders to retain a second interim dividend of 26.3p in effect raising the val-

ue of the offer to £9.863p. The initial bid last October was worth £10.10 a share but since then Southern Electric has sold its stakes in the National Grid and the pumped storage power station business First Hydro and undertaken a share consolidation.

On a like-for-like basis, the bid is worth about £11 compared with last October's offer. Shares in National Power rose 13p to 605p while Southern Electric shot up 32p to 891p.

The American camp immediately attacked the revised offer, arguing that it valued Southern on a higher earnings multiple than any of the other regional electricity companies taken over so far.

Analysts estimated that the bid valued Southern Electric at 14 times earnings compared with the 11 times earnings that Southern Company paid for Sweb last year and the 13.6 times that another US utility, Central and South West of Texas, paid for Seaboard - the highest bid in the sector so far.

However, National Power hit back arguing that the power station disposal to Hanson and the Southern Electric bid, if successful, would lead to "very significant earnings accretion", giving it scope to raise dividends.

Analysts estimate that the two deals could enhance earnings by between 20 and 30 per cent. National Power added that neither it nor Southern Electric, believed the approach by the US company changed the "compelling logic supporting an immediate implementation of their proposed strategic unification".

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## Economy: Surge to £5.9bn prompts speculation of higher borrowing costs by the autumn

### Strong lending fuels rate fears

DIANE COYLE  
Economics Editor

The spectre of higher interest rates was raised yesterday by new figures showing far stronger than expected lending and monetary growth last month. Michael Dicks, an economist at investment bank Lehman Brothers, said: "This is another plank in the argument for interest rates to go up sooner rather than later."

Financial markets expect the cost of borrowing to start rising by the autumn, a timetable that could be embarrassing for the Government.

Total lending by banks and building societies amounted to £5.9bn last month, with the big banks reporting a further rise in loans to industry though mortgage lending remained flat.

The British Bankers' Association said borrowing by manufacturing industry at £365m was the highest for a year. There was also record demand

for £1.4bn of funds by leasing companies.

Martin Hall, director general of the Finance and Leasing Association, said this was consistent with members' reports of a strong pick-up in investment demand, particularly for inward investment and infrastructure projects.

Growth of the broad money measure, M4, remained in double digits at 10.1 per cent compared with 10.2 per cent in February.

It has been running above the Government's 3-9 per cent target range for the past five months.

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, warned the Chancellor of the Exchequer last month that rates might have to be raised again if monetary growth did not moderate.

Mr Clarke described the strong growth in M4 as "puzzling".

Economists at the Bank are drafting next month's Inflation Report, which will pass a verdict on whether the Chancellor will meet his inflation target.

February's report concluded that this was "more likely than not" but most subsequent economic statistics have been buoyant.

The CBI's quarterly trends survey, due today, and retail sales figures on Thursday will be scrutinised for further evidence of a pick-up in the economy.

The launch of the gilts repo market on 1 January has in-

creased the money supply and lending figures by several billion pounds a month.

Yet even excluding this effect the underlying rate of broad money growth has nearly doubled in less than a year.

Many economists think this is not a sign of direct inflationary pressure because the takeover boom is behind the surge. For example, about £1.75bn of the March increase in borrowing was financing for Granada's takeover of Forté.

However, Professor Tim Congdon of Lombard Street research, a member of the Treasury's panel of "wise persons", said: "There are classic signals of monetary excesses."

Institutional investors flush with cash were bidding up shares, land and property prices, he said. Shares prices are at near-record levels, while land rose 29 per cent in value last year and has climbed since then according to estate agents Savills.

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## No automatic bail-out in future debt crises, G10 ministers warn

RUPERT CORNWELL  
Washington

Finance ministers of the world's richest nations warned yesterday that private sector creditors of a country facing a debt crisis could no longer expect to be bailed out by their own governments - as in effect happened when Mexico came within an ace of financial collapse at the end of 1994.

The new tougher approach to handling an international financial emergency are among the recommendations of a working group of senior officials from the Group of Ten industrial countries, approved yesterday at a G10 session, kicking off the formal agenda of the International Monetary Fund's annual meeting here.

Designed to head off a repeat of the Mexican crisis which was only contained by an ad hoc rescue package put together by the US, the IMF and the Basle-based BIS, the working group's proposals are but one part of a big effort by the fund that ideally would prevent such near-disasters from occurring - but that if they do, to make sure a mechanism is in place to cope with them.

To prevent a repeat of the Mexican debacle which caught markets and governments by almost complete surprise, the fund wants members to commit

to publish improved financial and economic statistics that would permit a potential crisis to be detected in advance. More than two dozen countries have signed up to the scheme. But if the worst comes to the worst, warns the G10 report, "there should be no presumption that any type of debt will be exempt from payments suspensions or restructuring".

Wrangling, however, is holding up plans to double the IMF's resources to tackle crisis, by enlarging the general arrangements to borrow (GAB) credit line from the existing \$25bn (£16.5bn) to \$50bn. This would be achieved by bringing in new countries alongside the G10 countries which currently contribute to the GAB. But the newcomers, who would operate a parallel "new arrangements to borrow" credit line, are insisting on equal ranking with the founder members. Some of these latter however insist on keeping a special status.

The discussions came 24 hours after top officials of the G7, the inner group of industrial nations, had agreed that the current economic slowdown in Europe, especially in Germany and France, is essentially over. Addressing the IMF yesterday, Kenneth Clarke, said stronger growth should resume in continental Europe in the second half of 1996.

## Recovery in the housing market stalls

NIC CICUTTI

The stuttering recovery in the housing market appears to be mis-firing again, with fresh figures showing the number of home purchasers remaining at broadly the same level in March as in the previous two months.

Monthly figures issued yesterday by the Inland Revenue showed 89,000 properties changed hands in March on a seasonally adjusted basis, down from 91,000 in February and 97,000 in January.

The disappointing figures came as a monthly survey by the Building Societies Association, the industry trade body, showed the number of net new com-

mitments by its members was 42,000 last month, down from 43,000 the previous month. Net commitments are an important indicator of future demand in the housing market, reflecting purchases still six or seven weeks from completion.

However, the BSA's figures showed commitments stalled at the same level as 12 months ago.

Separately, a separate survey by big British banks showed a slight drop in loans secured on properties, down from £647m in February to £632m in March. The total was still up on March 1995, when lending stood at £554m.

Jonathan Loynes, UK economist at HSBC Markets, said:

"[These are] surprisingly weak commitment numbers given recent surveys and anecdotal evidence pointing to a further pick-up in housing market activity. We remain confident mortgage demand will continue to climb in the months ahead. But the rise so far has only made good the ground lost in the first half of 1995."

"Further progress is likely to remain patchy as the rise as the rise in market interest rates prompts the disappearance of cheaper fixed-rate deals available at the start of this year."

Mr Loynes added that although the market had enough momentum to sustain further price rises in the next few

months, an upturn in demand was crucial to sustain it beyond the summer.

Despite the gloomy comments, the BSA claimed to be reassured by separate figures showing a sharp jump in new mortgage lending, excluding re-mortgages, to a nine-month high of £1.03bn in March, from £603m in February.

Peter Williams, head of research at the BSA, said: "Strong lending reflected the traditional spring factors, encouraging people to move house now. This is underlined by seasonally adjusted figures which show both net advances and approvals almost unchanged from last month."

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low
FTSE 100	3852.70	-4.40	-0.1	3852.70	2639.50
FTSE 250	4544.10	+9.80	+0.2	4544.10	4015.30
FTSE 350	1944.60	-0.80	-0.0	1944.60	1816.80
FT Small Cap	2195.32	+7.35	+0.3	2195.32	1954.06
FT All Share	1923.94	-0.23	-0.0	1923.94	1791.95
New York	5566.19	+30.71	+0.6	5566.19	3832.08
Tokyo	22123.89	+240.05	+1.1	22123.89	19734.70
Hong Kong	10909.98	+91.49	+0.8	11594.99	10073.39
Frankfurt	2545.91	+0.29	+0.4	2545.91	2253.88

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling*	UK medium gilt*	US long bond	Money Market Rates	Bond Yields*	
1 Month	1 Year	30 Year	1 Month	1 Year	30 Year
5.94	6.38	8.00	5.94	6.38	8.00
5.47	5.75	6.46	5.47	5.75	6.46
0.50	0.84	3.30	0.50	0.84	3.30
3.28	3.25	6.34	3.28	3.25	6.34

# CURRENCIES

Year	Rate
1980	1.48
1981	1.50
1982	1.52
1983	1.49
1984	1.50

Year	Rate
1980	2.20
1981	2.25
1982	2.22
1983	2.23
1984	2.24

Year	Rate
1980	175
1981	178
1982	180
1983	176
1984	177

Major Dollar exchange rates and DM Street Day at 1230 hours

## Pound

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
\$ (London)	1.5113	-0.045	1.6079
\$ (New York)	1.5120	+0.206	1.6040
DM (London)	2.2816	+0.880	2.2026
¥ (London)	161.152	-1.184	134.014
£ Index	83.8	-0.1	84.2

## Dollar

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£ (London)	0.6617	-0.18	0.6219
\$ (New York)	0.6614	-0.09	0.6234
DM (London)	1.5184	+1.07	1.3699
¥ (London)	106.635	-10.33	83.35
£ Index	96.5	-0.2	87.6

## OTHER INDICATORS

	Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago	Index	Latest Yr. Avg	Next Figs
DM Street \$	18.85	+0.26	18.55	RPI	107.5	+2.2pt 147.5 16 May
Gold \$	391.75	+1.15	391.40	GDP	151.8	+0.9pt 106.1 29 Apr



Looking good: Kenneth Clarke is optimistic that strong growth will resume in Europe in the second half

April 20 1996



# Morton plays hard ball on the tunnel he built



'Plainly, on any ordinary analysis, the banks ought to own Eurotunnel and the shares should be worth no more than the value of their travel concessions'

Ever since he first became co-chairman of ways saw his purpose as exclusively that of getting the tunnel built, up and running. The means by which this was achieved were not necessarily important. The paramount thing was simply to get the tunnel in place. There is rarely room for self-doubt and truth in such single-minded pursuit of the grand design. Sir Alastair, it can fairly be said, ignored the underlying reality with impunity, such was his ambition and strength of purpose. From the start the reality was always that the tunnel might get built for the sums being talked of, it might even generate a return for investors and bankers, but most probably it wouldn't. You never heard that from Eurotunnel and its advisors. Their message was always one of unrelenting optimism and flamboyant self-assurance.

Well, now the tunnel is built, so Sir Alastair has achieved his great purpose. But with formal admission that debts can never be repaid, what a mess this experiment in private finance has left behind.

With the help of Sir Alastair and French law, which gives investors higher standing as creditors than the rock-bottom position they get in the Anglo-Saxon world, shareholders may salvage the odd plank or two from the wreckage - but only if bankers take pity on them.

Sir Alastair has got the tunnel built, certainly, but he has also demonstrated in the process that infrastructure projects of such

complexity, size and cost cannot be privately financed. Bankers probably always recognised this, in confidence at least. Backing Eurotunnel was never a wholly commercial decision in their case. Even Japanese bankers, the group that complains most vocally these days about being misled, were reluctantly persuaded into it by their own ministry of finance as a way of shoring up Japan's wider commercial interest in Britain and the rest of Europe.

For them it was a kamikaze act of duty for the greater good of Japan. To a lesser extent the same was true of British and French banks, who were largely arm-twisted into the mire.

But none of them will easily forgive or forget. Eurotunnel is a one-off. Nothing quite like it will be attempted again. In future such projects will require genuine partnership between state and private sector with the state shouldering a high proportion of the risk, or, as in the case of the high-speed rail link, a big slug of public subsidy.

Hard to believe, but it was less than two years ago that Sir Alastair last persuaded bankers and shareholders to dip their hands into their pockets for Eurotunnel. On that occasion Sir Alastair bullied banks and shareholders into a £1.5bn refinancing. Some of the claims he made when he was trying to pull them into line ought to make him blush now, but probably won't. Even now, Sir Alastair believes he will one day be vindicated - that the tunnel will eventually

pay back every penny invested and some. The irony is that it won't be until long after his death that we will know for sure. For the time being the odds look heavily stacked against him.

Nevertheless, with his talent for bluster, bullying and - where necessary - prevarication, Sir Alastair was clearly the man of the moment.

How many others would have had the cheek to persuade so many people to empty so much money into a black hole? For the shareholders, angry as they have every right to be, he is still the right man to fight the banks over what is left.

Plainly, on any ordinary analysis, the banks ought to own Eurotunnel and the shares should be worth no more than the value of their travel concessions. But Sir Alastair is playing hard ball, and will probably succeed in keeping at least a small slice of the equity for shareholders.

## Time to show or go in Atlanta

It is, as they say in Atlanta, Georgia, fast approaching time to show or go. Will the good of boys from Southern Company take the plunge and bid or will the poison pill of National Power's increased offer for Southern Electric prove too much even for American stomachs?

The men from Atlanta have in some ways

boxed themselves in by relying too much on old-fashioned British fair play. They said last week that they would not come up with an offer for National Power until the Government had decided whether to clear the way for an orgy of vertical integration in the electricity industry. John Baker of National Power, who knows a thing or two about how to play his cards in Whitehall, is not allowing himself to be inconvenienced by such formalities as ministerial pronouncements and MMC reports.

While the Americans have sat on their hands, watching ever more incredulously, he has been busy unscrewing the fixtures and fittings with such gusto that Southern may hardly recognise the place even if they do get to move in.

The odd power station or three is missing, but never mind, here's another regional electricity company to go with the one you already own.

Shareholders in National Power could be forgiven for feeling more than a little bemused. Nor does it help when the potential suitor for your company happens to go under the same name as the one it intends to seek your permission to buy. But perhaps they should content themselves in the knowledge that right now their shares are a one-way bet.

The multiple of earnings National Power is offering for Southern Electric is right at the top of the range and perhaps it might have got more out of Hanson for the gen-

erating capacity it is buying to add to its own REC, Eastern.

There is plainly a danger that National Power will end up overpaying in its anxiety to escape the clutches of the Americans. But recent history has shown us that it is extraordinarily difficult to pay too much for a regional electricity company.

In any case, if Mr Baker is as good as his word then the two deals it has stitched together in the last six days, allied to declining dividend cover, will do wonders for his ability to reward shareholders. Phrases like "very significant earnings accretion" are not ones that easily pop from the mouths of merchant bankers and lawyers when drafting offer documents.

The alternative prospect is of the Americans throwing silly money at National Power, notwithstanding their efforts to talk the price down in the last week. It is hard to believe that Southern had not already factored in the possibility of a scorched-earth defence from National Power.

After all its advisers, SBC Warburg, know a thing or two about such matters from the Trafalgar-Northern battle where its two former halves acted on opposite sides of enemy lines.

Southern's exorbitant rating, coupled with low US interest rates and the phlegmatic approach Wall Street takes to highly-gear utilities certainly enable it to pay top dollar. It is hard to see the Americans having gone this far only to turn away.

## Confidence sends unit trust sales to a record

NIC CICUTTI

Sales of unit trusts surged more than 25 per cent to a record £4.1bn in the year to April, boosted by growing confidence among investors in the stock market.

The net increase was aided by exceptional unit trust sales for March, reaching £1bn compared to £566m the previous month. The monthly figures beat the previous record of £975m achieved two years ago. The figures, issued yesterday by the Association of Unit Trust and Investment Funds, the industry trade body, reflect a return to direct equity-linked investments after the sales collapse in 1994.

Autif's figures came as separate statistics by the Building Societies Association showed an outflow of £279m in March. Although on a seasonally-

adjusted basis, net receipts reached £116m in March, the figures this year were much lower compared with the same statistics for 12 months ago when net receipts totalled £840m.

Peter Williams, head of research at the BSA, said: "The size of the outflow is likely to represent seasonal factors, as March is the latest date for investments in PEPs in order to fully exploit the tax advantages. "Savers' interest in equity-hashed investments such as unit trusts may also have increased this and may have influenced the size of the outflow."

However, he pointed out that there was a growing trend for building societies to offer their own unit trust and PEP products. This meant that while money may have shifted out of deposit-style accounts a large slice of funds would still have

remained with the societies under a different guise.

Philip Warland, director general at Autif, said: "Increased awareness of the benefits of unit trusts, together with a resurgence in overall investor confidence and tax year-end deadlines have spurred investors into action."

Mr Warland warned of the possibility of a future month-on-month tail-off in sales. He added: "The pattern of savings flows in the economy is very complex at the moment, with money being retained in building societies because of potential bonuses [from de-mutualisations]."

"Maturing Tassas are also providing a source of new money flows. When that money is released and seeks higher returns, the flows into unit trusts will begin to rise again."

Autif's figures for the 1995/96 tax year mark an end to the shattering reverse unit trust investments and PEPs suffered 12 months previously.

Last month, PEP sales reached £990m, more than double the previous month's total and £149m more than the last all-time record of two years ago.

A substantial slice of PEP sales, £369m, took place in the last few days before the end of the tax year on April 5, compared to £225m in the same period a year earlier.

Three UK sectors, gilt and fixed interest; growth; and growth and income accounted for 60 per cent of the £1bn in sales achieved in March.

Corporate bond PEPs, which were only launched last summer and regarded as a safer form of investment, continued to notch up higher sales reaching £225m in March, up from £165m in February.

## Tobacco Dock aims at the moon

NIGEL COPE

Gerald Ratner, former chairman of the Ratners jewellery group, is set to breathe new life into his moribund Tobacco Dock shopping complex near the Tower of London by adding several family entertainment leisure attractions.

The plan is to add "turbo rides" where viewers watch a film in a seat that moves in tandem with the action, such as cliff rides or a trip to the moon. There are also plans for a virtual reality centre, such as a Sega World.

The development of a nine-screen multiplex cinema has already been announced and should open next year.

Mr Ratner believes leisure attractions should act as a draw to shoppers and encourage retailers to book space. Some stores groups have started to reserve space at the "factory outlet" centre where well-known brand names sell goods at cut prices.

It is thought that anchor tenants have been signed and shops should start to open on the currently deserted site towards the end of this year, in time for Christmas. "It has taken a long time but this is the final piece in the jigsaw, a source close to Mr Ratner said.

Tobacco Dock has been dogged by problems and in 1992 was bought out of receivership for £12m by Bisle Properties, a private group. The plans for Tobacco Dock appear to signal an acceptance by Mr Ratner that he is unlikely to succeed in his efforts to buy back the H Samuel jewellery chain from Signet, the renamed



Kiss of life: Gerald Ratner will add leisure facilities to the Tobacco Dock complex

Ratners business that has put its UK division up for sale.

Though Mr Ratner is thought to have found backing, it is expected that he will be out-gunned by larger bidders which include Goldsmiths, a rival jewellery chain interested in Ernest Jones chain, and Argos, thought to covet H Samuel.

Though a shortlist has been

drawn up and the candidates have received a second tranche of financial information on the companies, Signet declined to be drawn on sale plans when it announced a strong set of trading figures last week.

Apex Partners, a venture capital group, has put together a deal which would involve taking over H Samuel, Ernest

Jones and Goldsmiths and installing Goldsmith's chief executive, Jurek Piasecki, as the head of the enlarged group.

However, with trading improving, it is possible that Signet will try to trade its way out of its difficulties rather than sell the businesses, though its would still need a rights issue to reduce its debt mountain.

## NatWest Securities tops rankings

JOHN EISENHAMMER  
Financial Editor

NatWest Securities virtually swept the board yesterday at the Reuters rankings for the best City stockbrokers. The investment banking arm of NatWest Group won four of the five awards, maintaining its lead from last year as the best overall broking house in all sectors.

as judged by leading fund managers and the finance directors of big UK business.

NatWest Securities was voted the best broker research, best broker execution, and its oil team as best overall sector team.

SBC Warburg prevented a clean sweep of the top awards by being voted the best broker sales by fund managers and fi-

nance directors. The votes were weighted according to the significance of analysts' sectors and the businesses represented by the fund managers and finance directors.

Having been voted in second place last year by fund managers and finance directors, BZW was the big loser in the 1996 Reuters survey, slipping to the fourth and fifth spots respec-

tively. HSBC James Capel leaptfrogged it to take second place for the best broking research as viewed by the 100 largest UK-based institutional investors, and third place in the same category as voted by finance directors of the 350 largest UK companies.

Merrill Lynch was judged second-best broking research house by finance directors.

### IN BRIEF

• WPP, the world's biggest advertising and marketing agency, said trading in the first quarter was ahead of last year, prompting analysts to upgrade profit forecasts. Revenues grew 13 per cent to £590m in the three months to March, equivalent to like-for-like growth of 10 per cent, helping to lift gross profits by 13 per cent. The group, which owns W Walter Thompson and Ogilvy & Mather, said operating margins had continued to rise in line with the objective of increasing them by at least 1 percentage point a year. BZW is thought to have raised its full-year forecast from £137m to £144m, while house brokers Panmure Gordon moved their estimate up £5m to £145m.

• Rentokil continued the attack on bid target BET, claiming that negative cash flow could force the embattled business services group into a rights issue to finance future growth. Currently visiting Scottish institutions, Rentokil said BET's cash flow before acquisitions had declined over the past four years and was negative in the past two. It questioned how it could finance the future growth on which its defence is based without cutting expenditure or raising money from a share issue or further borrowing. BET's shares dipped 1p to 201.5p, putting them just below Rentokil's £3bn offer, now worth just short of 213p after the bidder's shares gained 1p to 353p.

• Italian shares soared after the clear left-of-centre victory in Sunday's general election. The prospect of a stable government drove the MIB-30 index up 5.7 per cent, or 840 points, to 15,617. The lira reached a six-month high of 1,024.4 against the German mark, compared with Friday's close of 1,042.

Hamish McRae, page 22

• McCain Foods is buying Everest Foods for £28m, equal to 110p per share. Directors of Everest and their immediate family members have given irrevocable undertakings to accept the offer in respect of approximately 58.3 per cent of Everest's share capital.

• Sega Enterprises said its joint venture, Game Works, with Dream Work, headed by film maker Steven Spielberg, and Seagram unit MCA will soon seek a listing on Nasdaq. The venture aims to have 100 amusement parks in the US in five years, starting with the first launch in Seattle in November.

• Sears, the retail group which is expected to announce a sharp fall in profits today, is selling Hoogenbosch Beheer, its Dutch shoe retailing subsidiary, to a management-led team backed by CVC Capital Partners and CITI Ven. Net proceeds from the sale of the business and related freehold properties will total £46.6m. It made pre-tax profits of £1.4m in the year to 3 February.

• Invesco has increased the amount of funds under management from £53.8m at the end of 1995 to £56.7m in the three months to the March, reflecting market appreciation and new business.

• Smiths Industries has bought acquired electrical conduit maker Adaptax and industrial ventilation maker Air Movement for a combined £68.6m. The two privately owned companies were complementary to the existing industrial group activities in the UK, Continental Europe and the US, Smiths said. Adaptax made taxable profits of £2.4m in the year to last June, while Air Movement made £5.5m in the 12 months to March 1995.

## US bank steps up lending war

NIC CICUTTI

The credit card war in the UK escalated yesterday as People's Bank, based in Connecticut in the US, launched a new card offering a 14.4 annual percentage rate.

The People's Bank card, which undercuts traditional high-street issuers by about 7 percentage points, has no annual fee and a 56-day interest-free period.

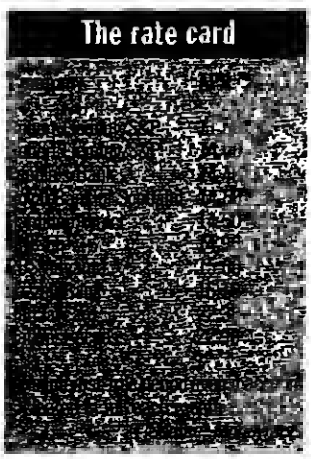
People's Bank said yesterday that a typical Barclaycard shopper, paying 22.3 per cent APR on an average balance of £1,500 would save about £100 a year by switching cards. Access users, now paying 23.4 per cent APR, would save at least £15 more.

Ronald T Uquhart, the UK managing director of People's Bank, said: "For too long now, credit card issuers in the UK have been managing credit to their own advantage, to the extent that some are still charging APRs almost four times

higher than the bank base rate.

"The average credit card APR rate is 21.2 per cent, which means British shoppers are paying £657m too much interest each year. [Our] card cuts through this complacency."

People's Bank aims to undercut traditional issuers by offering a no-frills service from its



UK headquarters in Northampton. The bank, founded in 1842, is among the top 30 credit-card issuers in the US.

In the past few months, aggressive newcomers have grabbed a share of the market by offering slightly more competitive rates.

Royal Bank of Scotland has launched the Advanta card, offering 15.6 per cent APR, linked to base rates. The RBS Master-Card charges 14.5 per cent APR.

Robert Fleming, which has long offered two of the most competitive cards, charges 14 per cent and 11.5 per cent APR respectively, the latter being linked to bank base rates. Despite its rate, the Robert Fleming card only has 200,000 users compared to 9 million Barclaycard customers.

Mark Ward-Norbury, banking services manager at Robert Fleming, said: "There is an enormous amount of inertia in the market. There also appears to be a cartel, with the high

street banks operating on very large margins and making substantial profits. Until one of the major issuers cracks and cuts its rates, the war will only be at the margins."

A Barclaycard spokeswoman said the popularity of its card lay in the added benefits, such as loyalty bonuses ranging from cheap holidays to toasters.

"We are successful because we were first in the market ... Our customers stay with us because they want more from us than a cheap headline rate, which then goes up through a range of hidden charges, including shorter credit times or additional bills when people don't pay them off on time."

"In many cases, people find that with other users who come from outside the UK and have less experience of this market, the credit limits they receive are lower."

She added that 50 per cent of Barclaycard users paid off their entire debts each month.

## More visitors help Euro Disney cut loss

TOM STEVENSON  
City Editor

Higher attendances and better hotel occupancy rates helped Euro Disney reduce its first half loss by 30 per cent to Fr169m (£22m). The improvement was struck despite a resumption of interest payments after a freeze on payments was imposed by the troubled theme park two years ago.

Philippe Bourguignon, chairman and chief executive, said: "This improvement reflects our strong commercial performance, notably in the hotels. Of particular significance is that it comes at a time when many tourist destinations are experiencing tough market conditions."

As well as Euro Disney's success in compensating for the increasing interest bill, the company pointed to a reduction in the effect of seasonal fluctuations in demand. The first half is traditionally quiet for Euro Disney, which has struggled to attract visitors outside the hot summer months.

The reduction in losses from Fr241m in the first half of 1995 was helped by a jump in sales from Fr1.68bn to Fr1.90bn. At the operating level, profits of Fr58m, an improvement of Fr140m, were the first positive result since the park opened.

Theme park revenues were increased by 11 per cent to Fr910m as lower prices had the intended effect of boosting attendance numbers. Hotel rev-

enues were 17 per cent better at Fr819m.

Those improvements more than made up for higher lease and financial charges, which are estimated to be Fr120m higher for the full year. The rising cost of servicing Euro Disney's debt burden, however, precluded a dividend, which has been passed for two years now.

The improvement in performance at the park has been dramatic since the restructuring of 1994 rescued it from the brink of collapse, although it is thought unlikely to ever be the money machine Disney dreamed of.

Attendance improved by 20 per cent last year to a record 10.7 million and it is expected to grow to over 11.5 million this

year. Hotel occupancy, which was only 55 per cent in 1993, increased to 68 per cent in 1995, substantially higher than the average for the area around Paris. Higher attendances have also fallen through into lower costs per visitor, which fell 20 per cent last year.

Shares in Euro Disney, which reached 75p at their peak in early 1992, closed 11p higher yesterday at 205p. Nigel Reed, an analyst at Paribas Capital Markets warned, however, that Euro Disney hasn't yet proved it can sustain current growth in the face of increased interest payments on its Fr15.1bn debt. He said first-half results, which include the traditionally slower months, were not an accurate gauge of the park's performance.

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# ABF shakes off Cinderella image

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Associated British Foods has been the Cinderella of the stock market for so long it is hard to believe that the shares have outperformed the All-Share index by close to a fifth since the start of last year. Even more surprising is that the change in sentiment is as much to do with the sugar and bread giant's underlying trading performance as its legendary cash pile.

Yesterday's half-year figures confirmed the market's confidence in the group, still controlled by 69-year-old chairman and chief executive Garry Weston. Pre-tax profits up 14 per cent at £198m in the six months to 2 March were well ahead of expectations and the shares responded accordingly with a 9p rise to 420p.

British Sugar, acquired from Briston for £880m in 1990, continues to demonstrate what a good buy it was. Profits rose by close to 4 per cent to £87m in the latest period, despite a comparable period flattered by around £5m due to the release of additional exports previously blocked under quota regulations. ABF's Silver Spoon brand has prospered under the heavy regulation of the industry. Thirteen devaluations of the EU's green pound in 11 months has done wonders for prices, although the latest rise in January has had the effect of pulling orders into the first half. ABF is warning the second half will not benefit to the same extent, but continuing demand for sticky drinks, confectionery and starch should underpin future growth prospects.

Milling and baking around a quarter of Briston's flour and bread has traditionally been ABF's Achilles' heel, given the cut-throat price war waged by the supermarket chains over the past few years. But even here there are signs that the business is holding its ground after the slow recovery that started last year. The bread price rose a year ago, the first for some time, plus a move to upmarket brands such as Kingsmill and Allinson helped Allied Bakeries lift its margins and profits. Henderson Crosswhite says the business swam against the tide of falling margins in the rest of the food industry last year and at less than 5 per cent there remains further scope for recovery.

Retailing, helped by recovery in the Primark discount clothes retailer in Ireland, showed the strongest growth in the first half, raising profits 55 per cent to £34m. The jury remains out on whether ABF will spend its £454m cash pile wisely. Most of the £3m profits contribution from North America in the latest period came from Kraft Foods' speciality oils and fats business, acquired for £97m last year. Even taking account of £3m restructuring costs, that return on capital is hardly exciting. Meanwhile, there must be a question whether the three Weston sons in the business, one of whom appears to

be earmarked to succeed Garry, can fill their father's shoes. Even with Henderson's upgraded profits forecast of £420m for the year, the shares look fully valued on a forward p/e of 14.

## Farnell aims for the top

Coming so soon after the acquisition of Premier there were no surprises in yesterday's full-year figures from Farnell, the world's third-largest electronic component distributor. The 22 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £75.5m was ahead of forecasts made during the bid but attention was firmly focused on chief executive Howard Poulson's assessment of the integration of Premier.

With such a large deal – the £1.8bn acquisition dwarfed Farnell's existing business and sets the company up nicely for inclusion in the FT-SE 100 – the success of that assimilation is crucial. If the claimed benefits of the deal come through, the newly renamed Premier Farnell will be one of the most exciting growth stories in the stock market's top flight. If not, the Jeremiah's will be lining up to say we told you so.

The news yesterday was as encour-

aging as anyone might have hoped at this early stage. On the important measure of service reliability, Farnell believes the former Premier businesses achieve their promised delivery times 85 per cent of the time compared with 70 per cent before the takeover. And with a way to go to match Farnell's 100 per cent success rate, the pessimists who claimed there was nothing to gain from the deal because Premier was already well run look wide of the mark.

The other good news to emerge from City briefings yesterday was an acceleration of the planned introduction of Farnell's Newark product over here. Analysts' forecasts for the year to next January have assumed no contribution from this source so could understate by a substantial margin if volumes start to motor in the second half.

Those estimates were usefully underpinned by last year's result, which benefited from a 17 per cent jump in sales to £527m. Earnings per share of 37.5p were 21 per cent higher and the dividend payout, which has doubled in five years, rose 20 per cent to 10.8p (9p). Sales growth in the low-volume, high-margin components business continued with increasing margins at home making up for the costs of starting up in the Far East. The high-vol-

ume commodity operation is coping well with tougher trading conditions.

If Premier Farnell matches NatWest Securities' forecast of £160m this year and £223.5m next time, the shares, up 3p to 720p, stand on a price/earnings ratio of 20, falling to 16. That is a premium to the market, but deservedly so and, at a big discount to Electrocomponents, its supposedly risk-free rival, the shares are still good value.

## Ronson builds on male brands

Howard Hodgson, the flamboyant former funeral director with a passion for Aston Villa, is not wasting any time in his transformation of the Ronson lighter and accessories group.

It is only three years since Hodgson alighted upon the company, then called Hoskins Brewery. Since then he has changed the name twice, first to Halkin Holdings and then to Ronson. Peripheral businesses such as the brewery have been sold while Ronson is re-invented as a kind of mid-market Dunhill.

The plan is to use the strength of the brand name – which is principally known for lighters and other smoking hits and pieces – and build a male branded accessories group that will eventually encompass a clothing range, sunglasses, leather goods and other accessories aimed at 18-35-year-old men.

The Hodgson plan was developing nicely before a fire in January destroyed the company's main warehouse and manufacturing plant in Newcastle. The fire broke out after the company's December year-end so did not affect last year's profits which surged by nearly 50 per cent to £24m. But the impact will be felt in the first half of this year. Sales are expected to be down by £2m to £2m. Margins have been affected as the company has had to source products at higher prices in order to fulfil orders and keep customers. Negotiations with the insurance company are continuing with £2.7m received so far and another £3.5m still to come.

All this will mean that profits and earnings will be flat this year, though a return to growth is predicted for 1997. Shares had fallen sharply since the fire in January, though they have recovered some ground since. The strategy remains unchanged but the fire creates some uncertainty this year, such as the details of the remaining insurance payment.

With house broker Williams de Broe expecting profits of £4m this year and the shares up 3p to 54p, they are trading on a lowly forward rating of 8. Cheap on the face of it, but not without risk given the company's small size and the difficulties in re-grouping after the loss of the factory.

# Accountant laps up new role as Wonder Woman

## CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK



The genuine article: Wonder Woman, not an accountant

Wonder Woman was among the thousands who ran the marathon in London on Sunday, and the be-costumed runner certainly stood out on the TV coverage. Step forward Darren Hughes of Hull, for it is he, a 25-year-old senior accountant with Ernst & Young.

Darren also ran the London Marathon last year, and this time he was raising money for St John Ambulance. Recently he tried to get on *Gladiators* but failed. What would Wolf make of it all?

Andrew Fisher, finance director of Farnell, the world's third-largest electrical components distributor, also completed the marathon on Sunday. He started training only half-way through the recent successful bid for Premier, so he was delighted with his finishing time of 4 hours and 15 minutes.

Mr Fisher also started well yesterday as Farnell reported its results for the year to January. But senior colleagues voiced their concern as the day wore on, one saying in the afternoon that he was "fading fast".

The current negotiations between Eurotunnel and its creditors, presided over by two arbitrators or "mas d'armes ad hoc", one British, one French, must be complicated affairs. It cannot be helping matters, therefore, that one of the arbitrators, Lord Wakeham, cannot *parle francais tres bien*. Just as well translators are on hand.

Sir Alastair Morton, co-chairman of Eurotunnel, needed no French when he turned his verbal flame-

thrower on City scribbles yesterday. Incensed that some analysts had forecast a loss for the year as low as £700m, the great man was clearly worried that the announcement of the real figure – £925m – would prompt the dreaded "worse figures-than-expected" tag.

"It couldn't possibly have been £700m," he thundered, and proceeded to prove it with a flip chart and felt-tip. No doubt the guilty scribbles will mend their ways.

Speaking of analysts, their version of musical chairs carries on, with one long-moulded move confirmed yesterday: Steve Plag and James Dodwell resigned yesterday from NatWest Markets, having already enjoyed a spot of "gardening leave", and will join BZW in May.

Mr Plag has been the top-rated analyst of all sectors in the Extel 1995 survey and will cover pharmaceuticals at

BZW. This follows BZW's recent poaching of water expert Peter Hyde from Klemwort Benson, so the firm's planned relocation down the river to Canary Wharf doesn't seem to be putting anyone off. Or are they just paying them a packet?

Meanwhile, reversing the outward flow at Merrill Lynch is Stephen Reisman, "top-ranked European auto analyst by Institutional Investor," who has been poached from UBS.

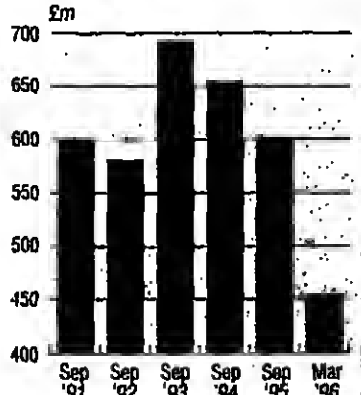
Fancy one of the most interesting yet most thankless jobs in the City? The Bank of England is advertising for a new head of its Special Investigations Unit, to try to prevent fraud in the banking sector.

"The rewards will reflect the seniority of the position and its importance both to the Bank and the financial community" – which sounds tasty, but you must have been an accountant for at least 20 years. The present incumbent, Ian Watt, is retiring is helping to look for his successor. Since the Bank has had to deal with the collapse of BCCI and Barings in the last five years alone, it's no job for shrinking violets.

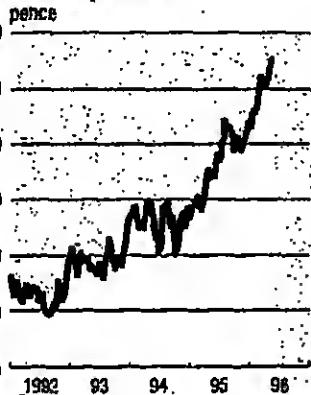
## Associated British Foods: at a glance

Trading record	1993	1994	1995	1996
Turnover (£m)	4.42	4.51	4.89	2.25
Pre-tax profits (£m)	355	382	375	173
Earnings per share (pence)	26.2	31.1	27.8	12.6
Dividends per share (pence)	7.5	8.0	8.75	4.25

## Net cash



## Share price



# LIG sales to balloon on £46m US buy

TOM STEVENSON  
City Editor

London International is to become the largest condom manufacturer in America following the acquisition of Aladan, the company with a lucrative contract to supply the US government with 250 million condoms a year for its overseas aid programmes.

The deal is the first big acquisition by LIG since a disastrous foray into photo-

processing in the late 1980s almost brought the company down. Analysts said the purchase marked a shift from recovery to a new growth phase.

Nick Hodges, chief executive, said: "This is a landmark deal in the group's development and provides us with an exciting platform from which to achieve sustainable long-term growth in core business areas."

LIG will pay a maximum of £46m for Aladan, which as well as its leading position in con-

doms brings a dominant place in the fast-growing examination glove market. Aladan has 13 per cent of the market and is considered well placed to benefit from a shift from powdered to powder-free gloves.

LIG has already introduced a powder-free surgeon's glove, Biogel, which is showing spectacular growth especially in the key US market. The new gloves sell at much higher prices than the powdered versions they replace, boosting margins in what

was considered to be a mature market.

That is expected to help LIG meet target return on sales of 15 per cent by the middle of 1997. November's interim figures showed a rise in margins from 4.8 to 6.7 per cent. Analysts expect the return in the traditionally better second half to the end of March to have broken the 10 per cent barrier.

Since LIG was refinanced in 1994 it has focused on its core businesses of condoms and

medical gloves, particularly in the US, the largest market for gloves and the second-biggest for branded condoms. It recently became the largest condom maker in Spain following the acquisition last month of Androtex, one of that country's largest manufacturers.

Aladan brings on board two low-cost manufacturing sites in Alabama. In the year to December, it made profits of \$10.5m (£7.0m) on sales of \$85.9m (£56.9m).

## COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
ABF (F)	2,680m (2,250m)	198m (173m)	14.3p (12.3p)	4.25p (4.25p)
Global Mining (F)	- (-)	0.11m (0.33m)	0.91p (0.89p)	0.75p (0.71p)
Crown (Australia) (F)	1,026m (1,025m)	115.0m (115.0m)	10.5p (10.7p)	14.80p (14.12p)
ES Group (F)	423m (347m)	20.3m (18.4m)	28.5p (27p)	13.1p (12.7p)
Barrat (F)	399m (30.6m)	425m (387m)	- (-)	- (-)
Lombard (F)	30.1m (41.2m)	4.85m (6.16m)	3.66p (3.37p)	nil (-)
London & Associated (F)	3.5m (3.13m)	1.73m (1.71m)	1.87p (1.91p)	0.72p (0.68p)
Premier Farnell (F)	527m (451m)	111m (82.2m)	57.5p (28.7p)	10.8p (9p)
Ronson (F)	34.0m (22.3m)	4.01m (2.72m)	6.49p (5.24p)	1.5p (1p)

(F) - full (A) - interim (R) - re-roads

# 2 for 1 GCSE and A-Level audio study aids with THE INDEPENDENT

The GCSE exams are fast approaching, and to help students perform to the best of their abilities. The Independent and the Independent on Sunday have teamed up with Arc Publishing to offer readers the chance to obtain a free audio study aid. When you buy one for £9.99, you can choose another for free. Or if you buy two for £19.98, you can choose three more for free, saving £29.97.

There are 28 titles available in our range of Pass Your GCSE and also Pass Your A Level audio study aids. The study aids each worth £9.99, are an excellent and proven way to help students prepare for their exams. Each title has been carefully produced by people who are the recognised authorities in their areas: the Chief Examiners and Assistant Chief Examiners themselves. Who better to advise students on how to get good grades?

The range also extends to ten of the most popular set texts on the Literature syllabus – and some of these titles consist of four cassettes. Each of the literature titles includes a superb reading or a definitive performance by legends of television and film – such as HarperCollins' *Macbeth* and Orwell's own radio adaptation of *Animal Farm* licenced from the BBC. Dr Rod Mengham and Ian Patterson of Cambridge University provide spoken notes explaining exactly what students should be listening for. These are informative and entertaining study aids designed to make subjects 'come alive' and to help students do well in their exams.

## HOW TO QUALIFY

A different numbered token will be printed each day until Saturday 27



Lit: Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry  
Lit: Romeo & Juliet  
Lit: Silas Marner  
Lit: Preparing for the Exams  
Lit: Drama Texts  
Eng: Preparing for the Exam  
Eng: Writing  
Hist: Intl Relations in the C20th  
Hist: Hitler & Mussolini  
Sci: The Spectrum of Life  
Sci: From Genes to Galaxies  
Geog: Settlement, Rural & Urban  
Geog: Examination Technique

A LEVEL TITLES  
Socio: Theory & Method  
Psychology: Ethics  
Lit: Practical Criticism  
Hist: The Rise of Hitler  
Econ: Introduction to Economics  
Geog: Weather & Hydrology  
Lit: King Lear  
Law: The Criminal Courts



April. Token 3 is printed today; Token 4 will be printed tomorrow.

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Postage and packaging is free. Please allow 14 days for delivery on receipt of your order. The offer closes 31 May 1996 and is subject to availability. Photocopies of tokens are not acceptable.

## GCSE TITLES

Lit: Animal Farm  
Lit: Henry V  
Lit: Tess of the D'Urbervilles  
Lit: Macbeth  
Lit: Twelfth Night  
Lit: Far from the Madding Crowd  
Lit: Merchant of Venice

John 1:1-50



## market report/shares

## Takeover speculation keeps the atmosphere electric

TAKING STOCK

## DATA BANK

FT-SE 100  
3852.7 -4.4FT-SE 250  
4544.1 +9.6FT-SE 350  
1944.6 -0.8SEAQ VOLUME  
698.2m shares,  
43,234 bargainsGilts Index  
92.74 +0.19

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

share price, pence

Midland Electricity

300 320 340 360 380 400 420

D N D J F M A

Takeover action, real and rumoured, sent yet another surge of excitement through electricity shares. National Power's £2.5bn offer for Southern Electric was the only deal to materialise but it was enough to spark speculation that others will soon appear.

London Electricity and Midlands Electricity were singled out for special attention. If the rumour mill was on form, a 920p-a-share offer should arrive for London today at its Holborn office from Houston, the US group. The identity of Midlands' alleged bidder was more elusive but a host of American and Continental names were banded around. London gained 38p to 855p; Midlands 24p to 417p.

NP's agreed offer for Southern, which still needs Whitehall clearance, sent the distributor's shares racing ahead 32p to 891p. It also lifted NP 13p to 605p, reflecting the stock mar-

ket's conviction that the American Southern Co's predatory ambitions would not be thwarted by the takeover bid for the UK group. The Scottish power groups, Scottish Hydro-Electric, up 12.5p to 367.5p, and Scottish Power, 13.5p higher at 400.5p, were drawn into the excitement and Yorkshire Electricity, for so long the sector's favourite bid candidate, rose 15p to 874p.

The electrical excitement spilled over to waters with Thames, another potential bidder for London, up 8p to 584p and Anglian up to 614p. United Utilities, combining the North West's electricity and water companies, gained 14p to 627p. After a shaky start its shares have been firm and there is a growing conviction among utility watchers that electricity-water combinations could be a strong defence against overseas marauders.

UU, it is thought, plans to buy



## MARKET REPORT

## DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

into the US gas industry. Cambridge Water, a second-liner which last month was still a statutory company, had another lively session, up 38p to 315p; the non-voting shares rose 33p to 290p.

It had not been for the utilities the market would have died of boredom. Trading was mainly featureless with the FT-SE 100 index briefly touching a new high but closing 4.4 points down at 3,852.7. Its performance tended to offer support to the argument that London is decoupling from New York where the Dow Jones Average was up more than 50 points in early trading.

Although Footsie faltered

the supporting index continued its relentless march, climbing 9.6 to 4,544.1 peak.

Among blue chips higher was Marks & Spencer, up 3.5p to 460.5p. A modest Merrill Lynch profit upgrading, £25m to £1.145m for this year, created the interest.

Cadbury Schweppes, 9p firmer at 527p, again attracted bid speculation. One food bid did materialise, a 110p-a-share offer for Everest Foods from Canadian chip maker, McCain. Everest jumped 30p to 109p.

Imperial Chemical Industries edged ahead 5p to 928p despite some unease about Thursday's first-quarter fig-

ures. Forecasts are in the £200m to £215m range against £221m last year. Year's estimates are being cut by around £20m to £120m.

Comments on accounting policies lowered Carlton Communications, 11.5p to 458p, and Glaxo Wellcome, 9p to 801p. Increased losses left Enron 4.5p down at 69p.

Lasmo, the oil group, achieved the distinction of becoming the first to enjoy a higher turnover on Tradepoint than on Seaq. The order-driven Tradepoint deals were recorded as 2.5 million while Seaq accounted for 2.1 million. The price, however, was unchanged at 189.5p.

Builders produced a few gains with talk that corporate action lurks in the sector. Costain, where Arab interests have built substantial stakes, added 4p to 101p; Redrow 5p to 150p and Tay Homes 5p to 144p.

Wainhomes gained 2p to 101p. In January, when Wainhomes' shares were depressed as police investigated alleged accounting problems, the rival Bellway housebuilding group, picked up nearly 5 per cent.

In an intriguing deal Wainhomes has purchased for £24.45m, payable over 10 years, 21 building sites from English China Clays. Developments have already started on some of the sites and others have planning permission. The deal, which expanded Wainhomes' territorial spread, puts a value of around £12,000 on a housing plot against an industry average nearer £16,000.

Micro Focus dived 192p to 1,143p as the rumoured bid failed to materialise and Filtronic, making parts for mobile telephones, jumped 38p to 433p on Pamure Gordon support. Manganese Bronze, the London taxi cab maker, moved ahead 10p to 307p.

Midland, the metals group with interests in the former Soviet Union, was the day's most busily traded share.

Figures are due soon and it is widely believed the group will announce its move from the doomed USM to the full market. There is also talk of further expansion moves. The shares held at 8.25p.

Cafe Inns, running pubs in the North West, jumped 15p to a 170p peak. It is benefiting from its swing from tenanted to managed pubs. The company now has 14 managed houses and 70 run by tenants. Cafe Inns hopes to raise £2m to help increase its managed estate.

It has untangled a joint venture with the Burtonwood Brewery, collecting two managed pubs and £1.4m in the process. In January its shares were below 100p.

## Share Price Data

Prices are a sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details, such as rights, are shown in Ex-El at United Securities Market a Suspended (p) Parity Paid (m) Nil Paid Shares.

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Calls cost 35p per minute (cheap rate), and 45p at all other times. Call charges include VAT.

## Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume
Harison	100,000	Librairie	70,000	St	50,000	Alloy Filter	40,000
British Gas	90,000	Ulyb 199	70,000	M&S & Spencer	50,000	British Airways	40,000
Norah	80,000	National Grid	60,000	Sainsbury	50,000	Gap Warehouse	40,000
British Gas	70,000	British Gas	60,000	British Gas	50,000	British Gas	40,000
National Power	70,000	BN	50,000	Scottish Power	40,000	General Elect	40,000

## FT-SE 100 index hour by hour

Time	Index	Change	Time	Index	Change
Open	3854.1	down 3.0	11.00	3853.5	down 3.6
10.00	3853.7	down 3.4	12.00	3853.9	down 3.2
11.00	3853.9	down 3.2	13.00	3853.5	down 3.6
			Close	3852.7	down 4.4

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## Italy's 'olive tree' coalition may yet surprise Europe

A left-of-centre government. But with the support of some hard-line conservatives, takes power in an important western European democracy. Do the markets respond with horror? No, they do not. Shares, bonds and the currency all soar and there are expectations of a speedy cut in interest rates. In Italy, evidently, things are never quite as they might seem.

Part of the reason for this positive reaction to the "olive tree" coalition victory is fear of what might have been: yet another hung parliament, leading to continued policy paralysis. Part is a celebration of the progress of the real economy now that politics, for the moment, are out of the way. Part is a delayed market local reaction to financial changes taking place in other European markets. But (and this is the most interesting bit) part may be a judgement that Italy can and will continue on its slow return to fiscal virtue under a left-of-centre government.

The first point - that the real economy will move ahead if Italy is a success story - is widely appreciated. The depreciation of the lira has helped. Anyone who has visited the northern half of Italy recently will be aware that it is achieving a recovery comparable with that of the UK, and far more vigorous than that of France and Germany. Its export success has even led to attacks that it has deliberately sought to gain competitive advantage by devaluing the currency.

That is surely not just unfair

ECONOMIC VIEW  
HAMISH McRAE

but impossible: the exchange rate of floating currencies is set by the market and the market has taken a dim view of Italy's financial management. In any case in the last couple of months the lira has risen sharply. But at the cost of some inflation (retail prices rose more than 5 per cent last year) and double-digit interest rates, a reasonably solid economic recovery has been established.

Italy managed 3.2 per cent growth last year and even if it achieves only 2 per cent growth this, that would be better than that of France or Germany.

The delayed reaction is also fairly easily explained. Along among the western European countries, Italy has not had a reduction in its official interest

so it would be wholly natural for weakness against the lira to be part of this.

In addition, there is the possibility, even the probability, of the lira rejoining the European exchange rate mechanism later this year to give a little spice to potential investors both in lira paper and in the lira itself.

But it is the third element of the group which has the widest resonance for other European countries.

If there is a real possibility that a left-of-centre government is at least as able as a right-of-centre one to run a tight fiscal policy, cut inflation, and hence out interest rates, then the expectation of Italy carries implications for the rest of Europe.

The Italian debt story can be

debt is taking up 20 per cent of tax revenues, and is equivalent to 11 per cent of GDP.

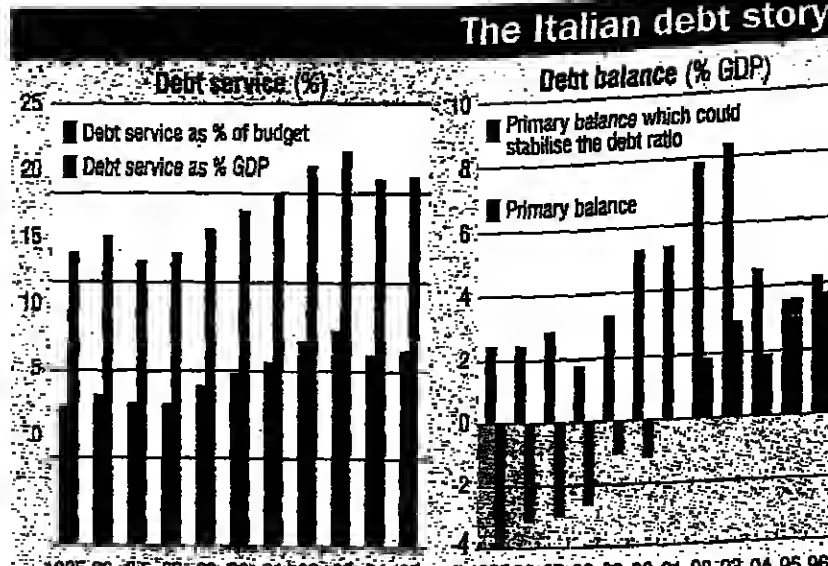
That is an absolute killer. If one-fifth of one's revenues go straight into interest payments just getting back to a situation where the debt does not keep growing explosively is tough. For reaching what is called a "primary balance", having tax revenues cover actual current spending is not nearly enough; you have in addition to run a large enough primary surplus to stop the debt growing even more.

Now look at the centre graph. Italy has been running a primary surplus since 1992, but an insufficiently large one to stop the deficit growing even larger.

Last year, finally, the primary surplus was large enough to stabilise the debt, not in absolute terms, but as a percentage of GDP. Estimates for this year suggest that again the debt ratio should be stabilised.

During the last century real long-term interest rates for good-quality government paper were 3-4 per cent, so there should be some room for cutting the debt service burden by up to half. If Italy could do that, a dreadful budgetary situation would become a manageable one.

But to do that needs two things. They are obvious enough. The first is to continue running a sufficiently large primary surplus to stop the debt to GDP ratio rising any further and ideally to start pulling it back. The other is to offer a sufficiently



are now 6.2 per cent, compared with 4.5-5 per cent in core European countries like Germany and France. Even that is historically high.

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But to do that needs two things. They are obvious enough. The first is to continue running a sufficiently large primary surplus to stop the debt to GDP ratio rising any further and ideally to start pulling it back. The other is to offer a sufficiently

ciently good macro-economic climate that rising investor confidence will start to cut the real cost of borrowing. The second depends on the first.

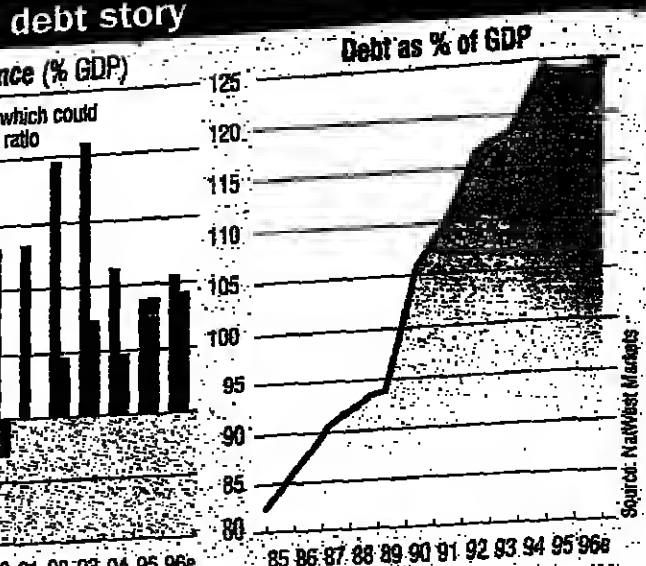
This is unpleasant for the obvious reason that it means less

money for public services, but

there is no other way. While the debt to GDP ratio has continued to rise through the early 1990s, some progress has been made. At least Italy is running a primary surplus, which it is not doing as recently as 1990. So the question now is whether a centre-left government has

government is not yet formed

so it is a bit ridiculous to start trying to call its economic policies, certainly from this distance. But that is why the market reaction is so encouraging. The professionals, who have no necessary love of the left, are implicitly saying that they believe that the balance of probability



more legitimacy than its predecessors in carrying on more of the same sort of policies. It does not have to change direction, for that change has already occurred.

Now these are early days. The

is that the process of fiscal reform will continue. That is the

only rational justification for the surge in the markets yesterday. There are precedents here. One is in Sweden at the moment, where the Social Democrats are gradually pushing through a budget stabilisation programme.

Another, which might spark distant memories, was the UK fiscal programme instituted at the behest of the IMF by the last Labour Chancellor, Denis Healey, in 1976.

It would be silly to try and draw too close a parallel there, but it is worth noting that sometimes governments of the left follow tighter fiscal policies than those of the centre or the right - sometimes.

## The possibility of the lira rejoining the ERM gives spice to investors

rates for more than a year, so it has some catching up to do. A cut in short-term rates following last week's cut by the Bundesbank is an obvious early possibility. As for expectations of a rise in the lira against the mark, the exchanges are in any case expecting some generalised further mark weakness.

swiftly told. In 1980 Britain and Italy had roughly the same sized national debt as a proportion of GDP. It was slightly larger but not much. Now ours is about 55 per cent of GDP, while Italy's is 125 per cent (see right-hand graph). As a result (see left-hand graph) simply paying interest on the national

## Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
US	1513	8-6	21-18	1000	—
Canada	20569	11-3	50-57	13634	2-1
Germany	22816	53-46	158-149	1564	27-25
France	77345	100-18	371-340	15005	64-57
Italy	22444	75-80	221-246	15513	57-64
Japan	9175	75-77	225-235	10654	45-44
ECU	1225	5-1	45-49	12373	7-8
Belgium	4706	2-19	34-29	19170	6-5
Denmark	83832	175-133	529-436	158190	55-55
Netherlands	25231	68-59	197-184	16960	107-102
Ireland	10670	10-4	40-48	15916	4-7
Norway	93557	105-64	329-293	16300	42-37
Spain	19504	26-36	72-89	12608	23-27
Sweden	10141	9-15	23-24	16704	59-23
Switzerland	10542	68-60	197-185	12269	33-35
Australia	12924	20-31	67-85	12713	19-21
Hong Kong	10681	101-61	294-270	17259	3-12
Malaysia	37626	0-0	0-0	2-496	0-0
New Zealand	22048	43-57	133-56	14586	30-32
Saudi Arabia	50571	0-0	0-0	2-749	2-7
Singapore	21302	0-0	0-0	14095	41-30

## Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	15114	0.9999
Austria	16179	10.653
Brazil	14988	0.9915
Canada	125916	8.3300
Egypt	5383	34.495
Finland	10074	4.7529
Ghana	24023	59.000
Greece	36555	24.400
Kuwait	51648	31.400
Kuwait	40536	13.001

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate. Dollar rates quoted low to high are at a premium; add to spot rate. For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0851 321 3003. Calls cost 36p per minute (cheapest rate) 49p other times.

## Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base Rate	6.00%	Prime	8.75%
Discount	5.00%	Discount	5.00%
Interbank	3.70%	Fed Funds	5.25%
3 Month	5.00%	3 Month	5.00%
6 Month	5.00%	6 Month	5.00%
1 Year	5.00%	1 Year	5.00%

## Bond Yields

Country	5yr yield %	10yr yield %	Country	5yr yield %	10yr yield %
UK	8.00%	7.41%	Netherlands	5.57%	6.27%
US	5.1%	5.2%	Spain	10.1%	10.5%
Japan	6.4%	2.38%	Italy	10.1%	10.5%
Australia	6.1%	5.9%	Belgium	7.1%	5.9%
Germany	5.1%	5.2%	Sweden	7.1%	6.2%
France	5.1%	5.2%	ECU	5.1%	5.9%

## Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
UK	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Germany	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
US	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%

## Tourist Rates

£ Buys	1994	1995	1996
Australia (Dollars)	15800	15800	15800
Canada (Dollars)	15800	15800	15800
France (Francs)	15800	15800	15800
Germany (Marks)	15800	15800	15800
Italy (Lira)	15800	15800	15800
Japan (Yen)	15800	15800	15800
UK (Sterling)	15800	15800	15800
US (Dollars)	15800	15800	15800

## Life Insurance Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Long 01	100-10	100-10	100-10
Long 02	100-10	100-10	100-10
Long 03	100-10	100-10	100-10
Long 04	100-10	100-10	100-10
Long 05	100-10	100-10	100-10

## Life FT-SE Index Option

Settlement price	Settlement price	Settlement price
Settlement price	Settlement price	Settlement price
Settlement price	Settlement price	Settlement price
Settlement price	Settlement price	Settlement price
Settlement price	Settlement price	Settlement price

## Energy

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Long 01	100-10	100-10	100-10
Long 02	100-10	100-10	100-10
Long 03	100-10	100-10	100-10
Long 04	100-10	100-10	100-10
Long 05	100-10	100-10	100-10

## Commodity Indices

Index	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Index	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Index	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Index	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Index	Settlement price	High/Low	Open

## Industrial Metals

Shore	Cash	3 mths	Value	UKE Stocks	chg
Aluminium HG	20569	1915-925	42808	804375	+1850
Aluminium Alloy	1915-925	1915-925	443	83000	+100
Copper	23635-655	23635-655	79726	307275	+1400
Lead	877-18	868-04	5754	89325	+425
Nickel	7900-80	7900-80	10907	34368	+732
Tin	6530-40	6530-40	6570	4589	+245
Zinc	10335-245	10335-245	10705	65275	+400

## Precious Metals

Shore	Cash	3 mths	Value	UKE Stocks	chg
Platinum	40425	40425	406	336	382/34
Palladium	33350	33350	201	336	39/34
Silver spot	532	532	100	66	336/40
Gold Bullion	332	332	51	34	382/34

## Agricultural

Shore	Cash	3 mths	Value	UKE Stocks	chg
Wheat	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Barley	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Maize	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Soybeans	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

## Other Softs

Shore	Cash	3 mths	Value	UKE Stocks	chg
Shore	Cash	3 mths	Value	UKE Stocks	chg
Shore	Cash	3 mths	Value	UKE Stocks	chg
Shore	Cash	3 mths	Value	UKE Stocks	chg
Shore	Cash	3 mths	Value	UKE Stocks	chg

## Latest Unit Trust Prices

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers	77.53	82.44	02.39	AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers	77.53	82.44	02.39	AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers	77.53	82.44	02.39	AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers	77.53	82.44	02.39
AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers	77.53	82.44	02.39	AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers	77.53	82.44	02.39	AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers	77.53	82.44	02.39	AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers	77.53	82.44	02.39
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AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers	77.53	82.44	02.39	AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers	77.53	82.44	02.39	AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers	77.53	82.44	02.39	AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers	77.53	82.44	02



business  
se Europe

# Bosra moves towards Pretty Polly perch

**Racing**  
**JOHN COBB**

Bosra Sham will be the shortest-priced 1,000 Guineas winner since Saucy Sue in 1925 if she can overcome a field that is likely to be low in numbers and quality at Newmarket on 5 May.

The absence of her closest market rival, Blue Duster, was confirmed yesterday, along with that of a Votre Sante, the French filly that made such a big impact on her seasonal return.

but who now heads for the French equivalent of the 1,000, the Poule d'Essai des Pouliches at Longchamp.

With that pair out of their lists, the bookmakers cut Bosra Sham's price again - she had already moved to odds-on after her impressive win in Friday's Fred Darling Stakes - and the Henry Cecil-trained filly is now low as 2-5 for the Classic with Ladbrokes.

That puts her on a lofty perch. Apart from Saucy Sue only one 1,000 Guineas winner

this century has started at shorter odds and that was the illustrious Pretty Polly in 1904. Like Saucy Sue she was a 1-4 chance but unlike Bosra Sham - who has run just three times - Pretty Polly had already raced and won all nine of her starts as a two-year-old. Even Scipio, who won four of the five Classics in 1902, started at 1-2 for the 1,000 Guineas and more recently One In A Million was 1-2 in 1979, Ravinella 4-5 in 1988 and Shadaiy 4-6 in 1991.

Bosra Sham seems likely to

score off much of the opposition and has 1,000 Guineas under her mercy," Ian Wasseil, of Ladbrokes, said. "Bint Salsabil may

**RICHARD EDMONSON**  
**NAP: Fourth In Line**  
**(Chapstow 3.40)**  
**NB: Katherine's Pet**  
**(Pontefract 2.50)**

be better over further than a mile, while there has been very little confidence behind Bint Shadaiy since the Dubai trials

It's difficult to find any other credible candidates.

Anthony Stroud, racing manager to Sheikh Mohammed, confirmed the disappointing news on Blue Duster, in doing so substantiating the negative reports which had surrounded the filly since over the weekend.

"Sheikh Mohammed respects the wishes of David Loder," Stroud said, "and while he is very sorry for all connected with the horse, this is the right decision for the horse."

Loder yesterday denied rumours, circulating in the light of Blue Duster's withdrawal from the field, that the filly had not been trained on. "I know it's been reported that she hasn't been trained on but she's really been fine," he said. "The problem has been that she has suffered a recurrence of a back problem which troubled her last season. It didn't interfere with her runs last year, but this year it has reared up at the wrong moment."

Also in explanatory mode was Pat Eddery who will ride Cecily's Storm Trooper in the 2,000,

rather than Danchill Dancer on the Duster's withdrawal from the Greenham Stakes.

"I think Storm Trooper has an excellent chance, and he's been up for me in the Feilden Stakes," Eddery said. "I'm worried that first ground would not suit Danchill Dancer, who is a bit of a heavy horse. Yet, saying that, he will have a first-class chance if it is good ground."

1,000 Guineas (Newmarket, 5 May): Ladbrokes 2-5 Bosra Sham, 5-1 Bint Salsabil, 6-1 Bint Shadaiy, 10-1 Dancer, 20-1 Cecily's Storm Trooper, 25-1 Danchill Dancer, 30-1 Dancer, 40-1 Dancer, 50-1 Dancer, 60-1 Dancer, 70-1 Dancer, 80-1 Dancer, 90-1 Dancer, 100-1 Dancer, 110-1 Dancer, 120-1 Dancer, 130-1 Dancer, 140-1 Dancer, 150-1 Dancer, 160-1 Dancer, 170-1 Dancer, 180-1 Dancer, 190-1 Dancer, 200-1 Dancer, 210-1 Dancer, 220-1 Dancer, 230-1 Dancer, 240-1 Dancer, 250-1 Dancer, 260-1 Dancer, 270-1 Dancer, 280-1 Dancer, 290-1 Dancer, 300-1 Dancer, 310-1 Dancer, 320-1 Dancer, 330-1 Dancer, 340-1 Dancer, 350-1 Dancer, 360-1 Dancer, 370-1 Dancer, 380-1 Dancer, 390-1 Dancer, 400-1 Dancer, 410-1 Dancer, 420-1 Dancer, 430-1 Dancer, 440-1 Dancer, 450-1 Dancer, 460-1 Dancer, 470-1 Dancer, 480-1 Dancer, 490-1 Dancer, 500-1 Dancer, 510-1 Dancer, 520-1 Dancer, 530-1 Dancer, 540-1 Dancer, 550-1 Dancer, 560-1 Dancer, 570-1 Dancer, 580-1 Dancer, 590-1 Dancer, 600-1 Dancer, 610-1 Dancer, 620-1 Dancer, 630-1 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1990-1 Dancer, 2000-1 Dancer, 2010-1 Dancer, 2020-1 Dancer, 2030-1 Dancer, 2040-1 Dancer, 2050-1 Dancer, 2060-1 Dancer, 2070-1 Dancer, 2080-1 Dancer, 2090-1 Dancer, 2100-1 Dancer, 2110-1 Dancer, 2120-1 Dancer, 2130-1 Dancer, 2140-1 Dancer, 2150-1 Dancer, 2160-1 Dancer, 2170-1 Dancer, 2180-1 Dancer, 2190-1 Dancer, 2200-1 Dancer, 2210-1 Dancer, 2220-1 Dancer, 2230-1 Dancer, 2240-1 Dancer, 2250-1 Dancer, 2260-1 Dancer, 2270-1 Dancer, 2280-1 Dancer, 2290-1 Dancer, 2300-1 Dancer, 2310-1 Dancer, 2320-1 Dancer, 2330-1 Dancer, 2340-1 Dancer, 2350-1 Dancer, 2360-1 Dancer, 2370-1 Dancer, 2380-1 Dancer, 2390-1 Dancer, 2400-1 Dancer, 2410-1 Dancer, 2420-1 Dancer, 2430-1 Dancer, 2440-1 Dancer, 2450-1 Dancer, 2460-1 Dancer, 2470-1 Dancer, 2480-1 Dancer, 2490-1 Dancer, 2500-1 Dancer, 2510-1 Dancer, 2520-1 Dancer, 2530-1 Dancer, 2540-1 Dancer, 2550-1 Dancer, 2560-1 Dancer, 2570-1 Dancer, 2580-1 Dancer, 2590-1 Dancer, 2600-1 Dancer, 2610-1 Dancer, 2620-1 Dancer, 2630-1 Dancer, 2640-1 Dancer, 2650-1 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## sport

## I did not believe any referee, at any level of the game, could properly be held responsible for a series of collapsed scrums

From what I have read, it seems the Rugby Football Union was unworried by the prospect of a win in the law courts for the young, paralysed former player against the referee. The RFU thought it would not – could not – happen. Not for the first time, that body has been proved wrong.

On this occasion, however, my sympathies are entirely with the men in hazards. I did not think it would happen either: not because rugby possessed any immunity from the workings of the law, but because I did not believe any referee, at any level of the game, could properly be held responsible for a series of collapsed scrums.

Unless Mr Justice Curtis's decision is reversed on appeal, or unless the law as laid down by the learned judge is changed by Parliament, the

consequences for the game are of the utmost seriousness. It is all very well for Brian Campsall and other leading referees to advise: "Carry on rugging." No doubt their intentions are good, but they are no protection against legal action.

True, the judge said his decision applied only on the facts of the case. These, as far as he was concerned, were principally that this was a youth fixture and that the referee had not even tried to enforce the crouch-touch-pause-engage procedure recommended by the RFU.

But this is not even part of the rules of the game. I am, I should explain, deliberately using "rules" rather than "laws" to avoid any confusion between the laws of rugby and the law of the land. The latter I shall now explain.

Any assault on another person is prima facie a crime. Consent is a defence only in certain defined circumstances. Thus sexual intercourse between consenting parties is not a crime, whereas if one of them objects it becomes rape or indecent assault. It is probably still a crime for one person, irrespective of consent, to cane or whip another for what the lawyers call "purposes of sexual gratification".

Sado-masochistic activities certainly do not count as what the lawyers also call "manly sports". These form the great exception to the law of consent being no defence. They include boxing, obviously, rugby almost as obviously, football and perhaps also cricket these days.

But there is one crucial qualification. The violence to which the par-



ALAN WATKINS on rugby

ticipant consents must be inflicted within the rules of the game. This is so irrespective of whether we are talking about civil or criminal law.

Thus punching an opponent is outside the rules of rugby, as the perhaps unfortunate Simon Dev-

creux of Gloucester has discovered. Some people think that a few swift uppercuts are part of the game's rich tapestry. But the law takes a different view. Not only can the puncher be prosecuted and fined or imprisoned like Devereux, but the punched can also take him to a civil court and demand damages.

So far, so straightforward. The developments of recent years are that the police have been more ready to prosecute, and injured players more willing to chance their arm in the civil courts.

The Ben Smoldon case, however, carries matters a good deal further. It does so in two respects. First, it was the referee, and not a player, who was held liable. And, secondly, no clear breach of the rules was established on the part of any-

one – even though the opposing tight-head prop may consider himself a fortunate young man to have emerged from the court without a stain on his jersey.

But if judges (who may well have attended one of those supposedly superior English public schools which play football) are going to investigate what goes on in the front row, they are in for a difficult time. I am reminded of the Irish prop Michael Fitzpatrick and a referee: "You're boring, Fitzpatrick." "You're none too entertaining yourself, ref."

A collapsed scrum can happen without fault on either side; a breach of the rules is often – even usually – difficult to spot. I have sometimes seen a scrum collapse on the defending side's 22 when that side has

the put-in. The attacking side then kicks the penalty. I cannot understand the referee's decision. For what front row would deliberately collapse a scrum in those circumstances – which are quite different from collapsing one to avoid a pushover try?

I would, however, alter the rules to give the side with the put-in an indirect free-kick after the first collapsed scrum. This would avoid a series of them. I would also keep Her Majesty's judges well away from a subject which is too difficult for them. In the meantime, not only referees but also players will have to take out costly insurance. The only people who can be satisfied are our insurance companies – and, of course, the gentlemen in wigs, who never lose a single game.

## Surrey aiming to bridge the great divide

David Llewellyn talks to the men who are determined to ensure success returns to their cricket club through hard work, discipline and a hunger to win

Surrey are emerging from a winter of discontent with a spring in their step.

Changes of chairman and chief executive, plus the appointment of a highly regarded cricket manager have helped push into the background recent financial and administrative problems and an incomprehensible lack of playing success for more than a decade.

The task of this triumvirate is to rebuild a once great club and get it back to winning ways. Even without the imports, the talent is there.

They have begun with a significant demolition. Surrey's own Great Divide – a wall splitting the capped players' dressing-room from that of the uncapped men – has gone.

As symbolism goes, it was fairly graphic. And although he does not want to take credit for it, Dave Gilbert, Surrey's cricket manager cum head coach, was the architect of the move. "To me it just made common sense," the former Australian Test player, who took up his new post in February after spending three years as Queensland's assistant manager, says. "We are all in it together and to discriminate by doing that off the field I felt was extremely damaging and it was hell of a contradiction then to expect everyone to mould together on the field."

He canvassed the senior players, who harked him to the hills and Surrey had taken the first tottering step on what everyone hopes will be the road to success.

Gilbert's enthusiasm is matched by that of the new chairman, Mike Soper, a straight-talking businessman and the incoming chief executive. Paul Sheldon, an orderly man.

"I want us to build a team within three years capable of winning all forms of competition," Sheldon says. To this end, he will apply the experience he gained in the publishing industry in creating an off the field team out of all the disparate components that go to make up the backroom staff at

any professional cricket club. Soper has implicit faith in those around him and rather than get too involved in the day to day running of the club, which apart from being Sheldon's role would not be possible since he has a business to run, is more concerned with membership. "I want Surrey to come back to being a members' club," he says. "I think we have to return to some of the traditional values, while still moving with the times."

Soper's is a tricky role. He had to negotiate an awkwardly signed as well as last week's agreement at which The Oval authorities, having predicted a profit of some £270,000 at the start of the year, found themselves owing up to having turned that into a deficit of some £315,000 – a per-

**'I want to build a team within three years capable of winning all forms of competition'**

ceived loss of almost £600,000.

The membership has been restless for some time. Too often over the last 10 years they have seen a side studded with gifted players grind to a shuddering halt in the chase for honours. Their last triumph came in 1982, when they won the NatWest Trophy; the last time they lifted the County Championship was in 1971, before many of the present side were born.

There has been frequent criticism that the committee were more concerned in the past with Surrey's status as a Test match ground and that those five days in August were the focus of the whole season, but Sheldon is determined to change that perspective.

"Primarily we are Surrey County Cricket Club," he insists. "But Surrey the Test match ground and Surrey CCC are interrelated. One cannot

exist without the other. And every time we have built another tier on the pavilion, we [the committee] have moved further away from the members. I want to change that."

So rather than allow his committee members to withdraw to some lofty ivory tower at the historic ground, Soper is planning to create a members' liaison group to maintain links with what he and Sheldon recognise is the lifeblood of the club. "I enjoy talking proper cricket to the members," Soper says. "Not cricket that happened 35 or 40 years ago. I like to talk about how the second XI are doing. Modern-day cricket. I am a club cricketer."

On the field, there is no doubt about how things will go. Gilbert has a straightforward philosophy. "We play sport for fun, for enjoyment, for recreation," he says. "Of course, once it becomes your livelihood, in some respects it becomes a serious business, but even then if you cannot have that fun aspect I think you might as well give it up."

But he is a hard man, and coupled with that fun aspect is perhaps the core of antedecent success over the years. "The formula for success is hard work, discipline and a hunger to win," Gilbert explains. "I've been absolutely delighted with the way the players here have responded. There have been some tough pre-season sessions, but never once have I heard someone complain."

He is not foolish enough, nor are Sheldon and Soper, to promise trophies this season, but Gilbert has a two-year contract and he says: "I'd like to make an impact in that time. I am very ambitious to go places and obviously I see my long-term future in Australian cricket, but while I am here I will give it everything I have. I'd love nothing more more than to be part of the Surrey set-up that knocks off the Aussies when they come over here next year. That would be fantastic."

Barriers are coming down at The Oval, and all that is left now is the hurdle of harnessing the talent and turning Surrey into a winning club.



Cut and runs: Graham Thorpe forces away on the off side during his innings of 141 not out at Chelmsford yesterday

Photograph: Peter Jay

## Thorpe's sights on 21st century

DEREK PRINGLE reports from Chelmsford

England A 317 and 60-2  
The Rest 123 and 253  
England A win by 8 wickets

As expected England A won this match with style and some ease. Indeed only a fine century by Graham Thorpe, the 20th of his career, forced Nasser Hussain's side to return for their second innings, as chill winds and showers reminded those present that despite Thorpe's sure and balm offering, it was still April.

The match confirmed little, except that on his day Graham

Thorpe is England's finest batsman. But then his reappointed England captain, Michael Atherton, knew that, so why was the Surrey man asked to play with the hopefuls against the impressively well drilled England A?

One reason could be that Raymond Illingworth feels Thorpe is too complacent with what he achieves, particularly at Test level where he averages 40.93 from 26 Tests. It is an average high enough to denote class, but with only two centuries, Thorpe will have to convert more of his 70s into hundreds to achieve the greatness that is within his grasp.

It is a failing he is well aware of, despite being the only bats-

man to have returned from the World Cup with his reputation intact after a lean tour of South Africa, where his one-day form far exceeded that in Tests.

"There is no doubt that Test cricket is the ultimate," he said, during a long break for rain, "but I don't see any point in harping on about disappointments. I don't think I've got any glaring errors in technique. Perhaps we should give some credit to the bowlers occasionally."

Thorpe differs from most English batsmen in his ability to pull to the boundary deliveries that most batsmen seem happy to tuck in behind and play down for one. It is an ability that requires phenomenal speed of

eye and hand, and a gift that appears to be bestowed solely on left-handers, like Brian Lara and David Gower.

It certainly makes them harder to bowl at, and Thorpe punished all the seamers. He hit the normally unflappable Muntun for successive fours, a sublime cover drive on the up preceding a rasping pull as the bewildered bowler shortened his length. Mind you, Muntun took the final bow, when he pipped Thorpe to the man of the match award. With a fifty and seven wickets to his name, only a Surrey man would have argued.

Ed Giddins also took seven wickets in the match as England A's seamers made the ball seam

more often by hitting the pitch harder than the opposition – possibly the product of a winter spent toiling away on the grassless surfaces of Pakistan.

To illustrate this dominance, The Rest managed three sets of pairs, including one by the tall left-arm Paul Hutchison. If it was a chastening first-class debut for the 18-year-old Yorkshireman, he at least had the satisfaction of knocking back Hussain's off-stump with a corker that left him off the pitch.

When his muscles firm up and he learns to swing it further, he will trouble the best. For the sake of English cricket let us hope some of his team-mates do the same this summer.

## Campbell boosts West Indian optimism

TONY COZIER

reports from Bridgetown, Barbados

The West Indies are only a few bours away from the emphatic victory in the first Test they need as an instant tonic to their self-confidence that has taken such a recent battering.

New Zealand, young, inexperienced and weakened by injuries to key players, resume this morning needing 126 to avert an innings defeat with six wickets

remaining against an attack refreshed after the rest day.

Their despair is compounded by the groin injury that has reduced their first-innings top scorer, Adam Parore, to a hobble and will oblige him to use a runner. It has also put him out of the second, and final, Test starting in Antigua on Saturday.

Even with the win that should be theirs, their captain Courtney Walsh and coach Clive Lloyd, in their first Test together, are realistic enough to put the situation into its proper perspective.

Apart from Parore's injury, all-rounder Chris Cairns and fast bowler Dion Nash were not able to play at all, rendering an already limited New Zealand team as weak as any in international cricket. Even so the West Indies had to perform on the field. Kenya and others who have embarrassed them in the past year were even weaker than the New Zealanders.

The assertive triumph that seems assured comes as a relief. The West Indies can take heart from the maturity of their two

youngest batsmen, Sherwin Campbell, 25, and Shivnarine Chanderpaul, 21, set up their comfortable first-innings lead after Brian Lara's early dismissal had increased the pressure.

Messed around by selectors, both came into the Test with their places still not entirely settled. They will be now. Campbell's magnificent 208, his first century in Tests let alone double hundred, was the innings of a true opening batsman. The peculiar demands of one-day cricket had unsettled him and

cost him his place during the World Cup.

It is difficult to understand why Keith Arthurton, an inferior left-hander, should have been preferred to Chanderpaul for so long. The eight Tests Chanderpaul missed against Australia and England last year was valuable time wasted. His 82 was his eighth score over 50 in 14 Test innings and the elusive century should not be long in coming.

**FIRST TEST** (Bridgetown, Barbados): New Zealand 108 (A.C. Parore 55, N.J. Nash 54, J.C. Adams 5-17) and 154-4 (A.J. Royle 82); West Indies 472 (S.C. Campbell 208, S. Chanderpaul 82).

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Wigan, the fat cats of Rugby League, have rarely shed away from backing their judgement with hard cash, and their signing of Billy Boston in 1993 was typically sensational. So highly did they rate the Cardiff-born winger, the scorer of a staggering 126 tries in one season for Royal Signals, that they happily paid the 18-year-old phenomenon £3,000 to sign up.

"It was a lot of money," Boston says today. "To put it in perspective, I remember going to the Challenge Cup final one year when the losers got £7... less tax."

Boston played in six finals, winning three, in a 17-year career, during which his 571 tries put him second only to Brian Bevan in the all-time scores' list. "We had a good side, although nothing like as successful as the present one. We only trained twice a week and had jobs too."

The son of a West African seaman, Boston was a postal worker for most of his career. He then spent 14 years with an insulation firm before taking over a hotel, The



Billy Boston

Griffin, next to Wigan's Central Park ground, in 1988. He recently retired, handing the reins – and his collected memorabilia – to his daughter, Angela, one of a family of five children, 14 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Now 61, Boston still watches Wigan's home games and never misses a Cup final, even when, as a Cup final, his own team is not taking part. He will be at Wembley on Saturday despite the traumatic experience in February of being knocked down by a stolen car, which left him with a broken leg and broken ribs.

Jon Cullley

## McColgan learns a lesson for Atlanta

Liz McColgan believes a lesson learned from her London Marathon win will increase her chances of winning the Olympic title in Atlanta.

She admitted yesterday that allowing a breakthrough group to build up a substantial lead in the first half of Sunday's race could have cost her victory.

Echoing the post-race comments of her new coach, Greta Waitz, she said yesterday: "It's a situation I will never let arise again. The problem was that all the main contenders were in the second group and we were so busy watching one another. We didn't give the girls who were ahead any credit. They could easily have run on and won the race."

McColgan plans three races before the Olympics – possibly starting with a road race in early June and including one over her old distance of 10,000 metres on the track.

The 31-year-old Scot, who put

an injury-ravaged career back on course in the capital, has no plans for a pre-Games visit to Atlanta. "I know it will be hot, humid and hilly – and not particularly fast. But when I run a marathon course I'm so focused it could be anywhere in the world. Because of the type of runner I am, I turn off everything. All I see is a blue line on the road."

McColgan admitted that her first reaction on crossing the line on the The Mall was directed at those who had written her career off. "So many people had doubted me that my feeling was 'I showed you'. My second thought was how good I felt – light and bouncy. It was amazing. That's why I am so confident for the Olympics."

David Bedford, who puts together London's elite field, will try to entice McColgan and three-times men's winner Dionicio Ceron back next year, even though any Olympic success

Mike Rowbottom assesses the Olympic implications of the London Marathon

would send their appearance fees soaring. Meanwhile, the London Marathon and the British Athletic Federation will each put £25,000 into a fund aimed at promoting distance running in the United Kingdom. Contributions from national sports funds will bring the total to £100,000.

Britain's marathon selectors will meet within the next fortnight to name two other women who will join McColgan in Atlanta. But who will join the pre-selected Richard Nerurkar and Peter Whitehead as Britain's third man remains tantalisingly open.

Evans, who had earlier said he would not consider running the Olympic marathon even if he had won in London, insisted afterwards that he would not decide his course until discussing the weekend's events with his coach

and agent, John Bicourt. But Bicourt himself was more forthright, making it clear that the plan was for Evans, a 10,000m finalist at the last Olympics, to try for the same event in Atlanta, thus leaving himself fresh enough to run one of the big commercial marathons in the autumn.

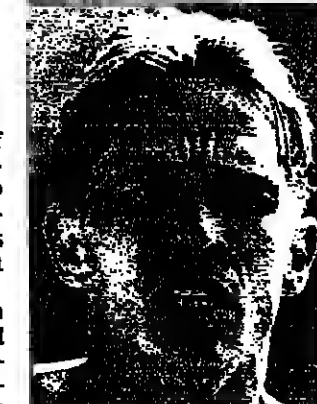
"If Paul does the Olympic marathon, he will be wanting to get into the top three," Bicourt said. "What we have to consider is what realistic chance he has of doing that, because who remembers who is fifth, sixth, seventh or eighth in the Olympic marathon? The Olympics makes millions, but it doesn't give anything to the athletes. Paul has got a family and a life to lead."

At 35 Evans has spent years reaching his present commercial value, and he does not have that

many earning years ahead of him. His is a perfectly reasonable position – but he needs to let the British Athletic Federation know of his intentions soon enough for them to alert other runners if need be.

Despite his top-10 finish in what was only his second marathon, Gary Staines, who suffers from asthma, is wary of committing himself to a marathon in the Atlanta heat and humidity. With the next British finisher on Sunday, Mark Hudspeth, back in 18th place on 2:19:25, the way may yet be open for Steve Brace to claim the third spot. His 2:10 run in Houston before Christmas put him firmly into the selectors' minds – but he may, ironically, have lessened his chances by running the Belgrade marathon on Saturday, where he finished eighth in the relatively disappointing time of 2:15:47.

Whether Belgium's Vincent Rousseau will change his mind



Evans: Olympic option

about boycotting Atlanta because of the heat remains to be seen, but it was greatly to his credit that he finished second on Sunday in conditions which he famously hates.

Rousseau's decision to step off the start line at Rotterdam last year as temperatures rose to 70°F was clearly fresh in Bedford's mind before the event got underway. "I stayed out of Vincent's way just in case he was trying to find me," Bedford said with a grin.

April 20 1996







## SPORT

CRICKET: Surrey aim to bridge the great divide

TENNIS: Holding court in Monte Carlo

## Sky TV deal could get RFU off the hook

Rugby Union  
STEVE BAILE

The internecine and international strife that is tearing English and British rugby apart may be resolved by a rescue made by an unlikely saviour: BSkyB, whose vast offer for the broadcasting rights to English rugby sent the Rugby Football Union in its independent direction in the first place.

Today the RFU intends, almost as an act of despair, to

state its case for separate English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish television deals when the present contract with the BBC expires next year. The other home unions are so unconvinced by what they see as the patronising English attitude that they are threatening to eject England from the Five Nations' Championship and make next year's Lions tour of South Africa without them but possibly with the French.

These are no idle threats, as the Irish attitude, enunciated by

Syd Millar, president of the IRFU, shows. "We're not beating about the bush on this one. We can't afford not to have our share." These ostensibly mild remarks should be taken in the context that Ireland have, for a quarter of a century, been England's closest rugby allies.

The RFU has effectively put its internal dispute with its leading clubs over the control and financing of professional rugby in England on hold while it deals with the television question. No meetings with English Profes-

sional Rugby Union Clubs are planned, and in the meantime Epruc, which has already announced a cup and league boycott, is getting on with planning its autonomous 1996-97 season.

But if the RFU was able to finalise an agreement for the reported £150m-plus with Sky - which would inevitably involve the sharing of live coverage of Twickenham internationals with a terrestrial station - it could then pass enough funds the way of the clubs comfortably to cover the costs of profes-

sionalism and provoke a retreat from the present entrenched positions. The only losers would, of course, be the punters.

The next part is even trickier, but if Sky - as is now being suggested - agree big-money individual contracts with each of the other home unions, then everyone is suddenly off the hook. Short of a straight RFU back-down, there does not appear to be any other obvious solution to either of its disputes.

While the RFU's "foot is off the pedal", as one club official

put it, Epruc claims its plans are virtually complete. The RFU's assertion, that no broadcaster will speak to anyone but it, is patent nonsense and, unless the logic of the Sky scenario is followed, at some as-yet indeterminate stage Epruc will simply declare its independence.

"We are going to go on with our strategy and when that starts to come to fruition there will be a remarkable sense of urgency on the part of the union," Donald Kerr, the Epruc chairman, said yesterday. "We

have fixture lists worked out in detail for all our competitions and, after a bit of fine-tuning, we will be happy to publish these."

As things stand, no meetings between the clubs and the union are planned. Yet various of the antagonists - Peter Wheeler and Kerr of the clubs, and Cliff Brittle, Bill Bishop and Tony Hallett of the RFU - sat within a dozen feet of each other at Sunday's Sanyo Cup match at Twickenham, Hallett and Wheeler in adjacent seats. Brittle, the RFU chairman, has agreed to meet

representatives of the Rugby Union Players' Association tomorrow. Rupa has also requested a meeting with Kerr.

Meanwhile, the third of the RFU's disputes - with Bath and Wigan over the restriction in Twickenham's capacity for the inter-code match on 25 May - is no nearer settlement. Yesterday's scheduled meeting between the police, the clubs and the union failed to materialise and it is now due to be held tomorrow.

Alan Watkins, page 24

## Gascoigne votes for Venables

Football  
GLENN MOORE

"About Paul Gascoigne..." started the inquiry. "Oh, no," interjected Terry Venables. "What's he done now?"

Gascoigne had, in fact, added his distinctive accent to the chorus of voices begging the England coach to reconsider his resignation. The request left Venables both exasperated and touched in public, and probably quietly pleased in private.

"I was gutted when I heard he was going to resign," Gascoigne had said, resorting, under encouragement, to tabloid-speak. "It will be a tragedy for English football if he goes."

Gascoigne was speaking after another imaginative Venables coaching session at Blisnam Abbey, where England are preparing for tomorrow night's friendly with Croatia.

It would, of course, be a much bigger story if Gascoigne had said: "It was a great relief when he resigned. I just wish he had gone immediately." Having been signed by Venables as a 21-year-old, and nurtured - in the point of favouritism - during Venables' stewardship of England, Gascoigne is hardly an independent witness.

He is, however, a man with little time for double-speak and political games. What you see is what you get and, when Gascoigne says it would "give the squad a significant lift" if Venables could be persuaded to stay you are inclined to believe him.

"The public are behind him, the players are, even the media

seem to be behind him. What he needs now is the full backing of the Football Association. I hope they can come to terms with him. I don't know why they aren't behind him. If we don't snap him up someone will."

"The players have great respect for him. I've had a few managers, I've been abroad. He's different class. He has different ideas, he knows what he's talking about and knows how football should be played."

"When he is talking all the lads are concentrating and listening, even Bryan Robson, even Don Howe, with his experience. When the gaffer speaks at meetings and he says, 'Anything to say, Don?', Don says 'you've said it all', which is a compliment from Don to the gaffer."

"He is bringing in 17-year-olds to join in training - we never had that chance. They are going to feel on top of the world when they go back to club level. He has brought in Bryan to give him experience, and Don. Even if he wasn't selecting me I would feel he was the best."

"We all hope it won't happen, that the FA will say, 'We want you, here's a five-year contract'. He should be there for the next 10 years. It must be nice for an FA guy to sit at Wembley and hear the crowd cheering 'Terry's name and think, 'we have a winner here'."

"It would be brilliant if they could get him to change his mind. It would be the icing on the cake for the European Championships."

Venables constantly says he has had enough of the speculation, then appears to drop very



Paul Gascoigne shows his support for the England manager, Terry Venables, at Bisham Abbey yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

gentle hints - like a knowing smile during a recent Sky interview - which suggest he could be persuaded to change his mind.

Yesterday, in response to Gascoigne's comments, he said: "It is very nice of him to say that. I did not know the players felt as strongly as that. But we've

gone through all this before. It's out of my hands and I can't see any way round it."

This is not strictly true. The situation is as much Venables' creation as the FA's. He is, as Gascoigne reflected, "his own man". The ostensible reason for his resignation, the series of autumn court cases, are still in

the way. The other reason, the lack of backing from certain members of the FA, also remains but could, at least, be dealt with.

At present the situation is much as it was in January. Venables is still going but no successor has been appointed. That may change next week,

when Venables is expected to meet Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, to "discuss the succession", but nothing is likely to be settled until the end of the domestic season.

If the FA followed Gascoigne's advice and offered Venables a long contract he might well accept it. But they

would also have to be prepared to ride out any storms from the court cases or the Teddy Sheringham transfer inquiry, which may follow.

Venables will select from a full squad for tomorrow's match at Wembley. Liverpool's Robbie Fowler is expected to be given a full debut in attack.

## Seaman at Arsenal until end of century

David Seaman, the Arsenal and England goalkeeper, is to stay at Highbury until the end of the century. "I've agreed a two-year extension to my current contract and that would take me up to 2000," said Seaman, who is set to earn his 23rd cap against Croatia tomorrow.

"I am very happy with the way things are going at Arsenal and it's good for me to have got the contract things out of the way so I can focus on the summer," he said.

The 32-year-old has been the mainstay of the Arsenal defence since his £1.3m move from Queen's Park Rangers six years ago and has now established himself as Terry Venables' first-choice goalkeeper.

Bruce Rioch, the Arsenal manager, recently scrapped the club's flat back four system in the absence of the injured Tony Adams and Steve Bould, which Seaman says was a surprise, but one that has paid off and was the way forward.

"It took courage to do it, because everybody knew our back four and what we'd achieved," he said. "But Martin Keown, Andy Linighan and Scott Marshall have got together and while it means I've had more work to do, more saves to make, it's better for the side because you're creating more at the other end."

Alan Shearer is confident he will be ready to lead the England line in Euro 96, just eight weeks after his groin operation.

The Blackburn striker went into hospital last Thursday and plans to resume training when he returns to Ewood Park. "I'm very optimistic, the operation has gone very well," Shearer said.

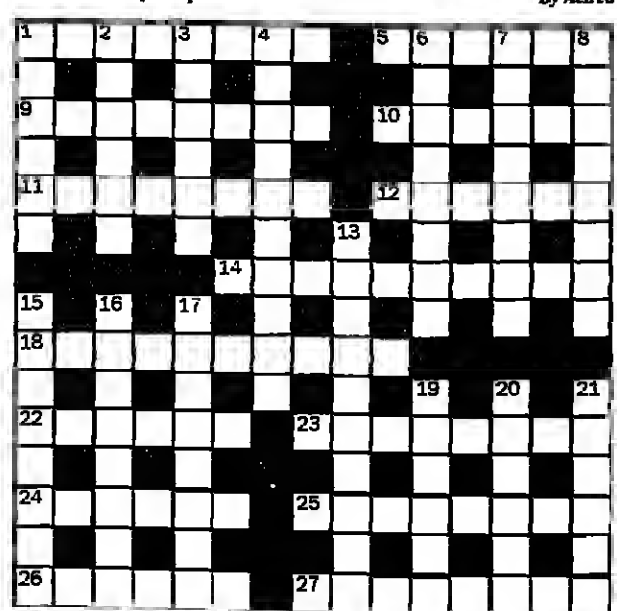
"I'm glad that I went ahead and had it when I did. I know that time is moving on, but my specialist has told me that it looks fine."

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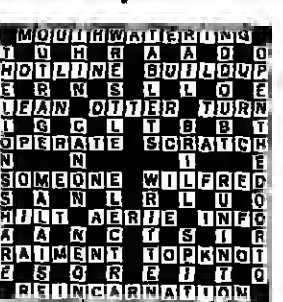
No. 2968, Tuesday 23 April

By Aired



- ACROSS**
- 1 Is surrounded by connected top men in this? (8)
  - 5 For example stocking up British wine is going out (6)
  - 9 Scot takes one woman back for something to eat (8)
  - 10 Crooked fellow dismissed from amusement arcade (6)
  - 11 Felt unhappy about remnant (4,4)
  - 12 Examination involving Department of Employment is a nightmare (6)
  - 14 Criticise computers which are bad for consumers? (4,6)
  - 18 Request delivery of The Independent? MP needs it (5,5)
- DOWN**
- 1 That is a person coming up, see (6)
  - 2 Calm and settle with introduction of conservative poem (6)
  - 3 There's much about vase to produce excitement (4,2)
  - 4 Knows, say, the body will take in data from this (5,5)
  - 6 But prank misfires leaving one without money (8)
  - 7 Woman is a beautiful Italian female (8)
  - 8 Silly attempt to take marine a smaller quantity (8)
  - 13 Planes go fast at bottom of outside broadcast pictures? (6,4)
  - 15 Have obligation in Herts. town which is great (8)
  - 16 Heads rolling? I have the wherewithal to fix things (8)
  - 17 Long to divide allowance of money in bank (8)
  - 19 Fellow fought a duel for old type of land holding (6)
  - 20 Verse form embraced by most Anzacs (6)
  - 21 Insist on right to invest in savings account when it's going up (6)
  - 22 Aims to limit the writer's changes (6)
  - 23 A call for help to secure optimism in fire resistant material (8)
  - 24 I'm about to remain in the same place (6)
  - 25 Hit and caned for misbehaving in performance? (3,5)
  - 26 Poor quarter got the thumbs down (6)
  - 27 Resolute person is beginning to limit bad law (8)

Monday's Solution



## Atherton reappointed as captain against India

Cricket  
DEREK PRINGLE

Michael Atherton was yesterday confirmed as England's captain for the Test and one-day series against India. The news came as Atherton was waiting to go in to bat at Old Trafford, where Lancashire were playing Yorkshire in a one-day friendly.

"I'm delighted," he said, when asked about his reappointment. "I feel full of running and refreshed. There are a few new faces about and I'm full of optimism. Hopefully that optimism can be fulfilled."

Quick to dismiss rumours that he had been close to quitting after England's lamentable World Cup, Atherton said: "I felt down, but it didn't take long to get up again."

## Parrott falls to impressive Lawler

Snooker

There was a surprise victory for Rod Lawler yesterday in the Embassy World Championship, as he beat John Parrott 10-6 to earn a second-round match against Dave Harold. Parrott became the second top-16 seed out of the first round following Gary Wilkinson's 10-9 defeat of David Roe.

"This has got to be the best result of my career," said Lawler, currently the world No 40. "John said some very complimentary things about the way I played and that was very sporting of him."

This was the first time in 13 visits to The Crucible that Parrott had failed to clear the opening baffle. "I've no complaints," he said. "After all, I've scraped a few 10-9s in my time. From 7-6 to 10-6 that's the best I've ever seen Rod play. He's a hard competitor and if there's 40 or 50 to be had, he'll get them. Now it will be interesting to see just how far he can go."

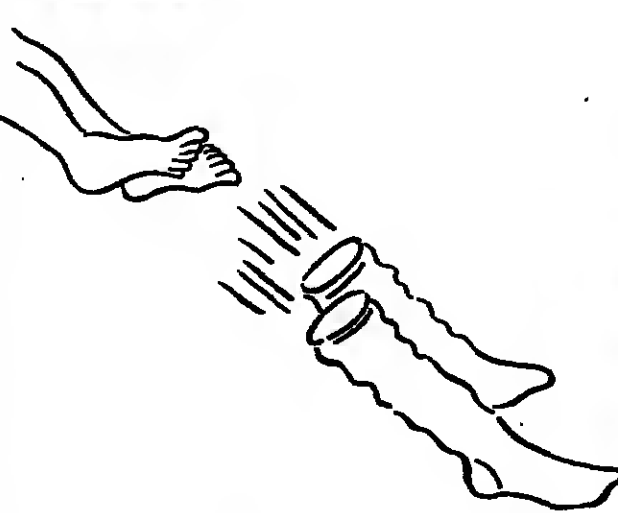
Parrott began the day 6-3 down, but seemed well on course to end Lawler's challenge when the match resumed. In 46 minutes, he compiled breaks of 99, 60 and 87 to tie the scores at 6-6. However, the 13th frame proved to be unlucky

shrug it off with frivolity. When they do well, his natural modesty forbids him from lauding himself or his team too loudly.

At 28, the Lancashire opener is still determined despite his meagre record of seven wins from 29 Tests in charge. English cricket may be in the doldrums, but they are fortunate to have in Atherton a man not afraid to thrust his bare hands into the nettle bed, knowing full well what the consequences are likely to be.

It is a rare instinct among modern sportsmen, whose tendency towards self-preservation seems inborn. In many respects he is like his predecessor and now co-selector, Graham Gooch. But, like him, he will have his saturation point and England will have to start winning if he is to keep his appetite intact. For the moment, he is hungry once more.

## MORSE



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